



# MALACHI

## *A Verse-By-Verse Study*

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## **MALACHI 1:1-3 (JACOB AND ESAU)**

Being a preacher, there is a lot of interaction with others about spiritual matters, especially so through emails because of the way this church is set up. There are many repeating questions that take a lot of care to properly and wisely respond to.

One of the common sentiments that comes up concerns whether God is mad at someone. Maybe He doesn't love that person anymore, or worse, maybe God hates him because things have gone from bad to worse without any seeming reason why.

Reading the first few verses of Malachi may bolster that notion. God loves Jacob, but He hates Esau. Maybe this is just how God works, and He never really loved me. This is why it's necessary to go through the Bible methodically and carefully.

If God loves Jacob (who is Israel), what kind of love is it when all they have faced is grief for the past two thousand years? Or maybe God loved Israel in the past but hates them now? Maybe He wants them destroyed, just like Edom. Lots of people claim that, even people in the church.

If so, then maybe God did love me, but now He hates me! It is all so hard to understand. What is God telling me with all of these terrible times I am facing? And how can I tell when the Bible is so big and confusing?

**Text Verse:** *"Moab is My washpot;  
Over Edom I will cast My shoe;  
Over Philistia I will triumph." Psalm 108:9*

Malachi is a short book that makes many claims about how the Lord interacts with Israel and how Israel responds. But this is not unusual because He is the same unchanging Lord who dealt with Israel eons earlier.

There is nothing inconsistent in Him as He deals with people. And yet, He does deal with different people differently. Is that inconsistent, or is it simply His right to determine how things will turn out? There were people in Israel who lost sons, but the Lord returned some of them to life, for example, through Elijah and Elisha.

But He didn't do this for everybody. Is that unfair, or is that the Lord's prerogative? Jesus raised a widow's son, Jairus' daughter, and Lazarus. However, lots of other people in Israel died, and He didn't raise them.

Someone may say, "My son was out boating, and he was killed when the boat ran into a mile-marker. Why did God allow this to happen?" Would it be fair if God said, "Nobody can ever go out and enjoy the water because someone might get hurt?"

In response, people would say, "Can't we decide on our own what we do?" But when they do what they want to do, and someone gets hurt or dies, suddenly, it becomes God's fault. We want our choice, whether smart or not, but we never expect that our choice will lead to disaster.

That is not a wise way of considering our lives. God allows us to choose things, even things that may cause us harm. We have to work, but the Tower of Siloam may fall down on those who are working in it. Or some really bad people may fly an airliner full of people into a building and cause it to fall.

People fly to various places. People go up elevators in buildings. Bad people live in a fallen world, and they intend harm to others. Engines malfunction, mistakes are made, and diseases are a deadly part of life on Earth.

Let us not question the goodness of God when we don't have all the information available to us. Regardless of the tragedies that we face in our lives, the Bible is a book of hope that those things will someday be behind for those who have come to Jesus.

If you want to know if God is good or not, look to the cross. The answer shouts out to those who understand its significance.

It's all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

## **I. The Book of Malachi, an Introduction.**

The book of Malachi is the thirty-ninth and final book of the standard Christian Bible's Old Testament. In the Christian canon of the Old Testament, there are generally considered five major divisions: the Pentateuch, the Historical books, the Wisdom books,

the Major Prophets, and the Minor Prophets. Malachi is the twelfth and final book of the Minor Prophets.

In the Jewish canon, there are three major sections: the Torah (the Pentateuch), the Nevi'im (the Prophets), and the Ketuvim (the Writings). Within the Prophets are two divisions, the Former Prophets and the Latter Prophets (also known as the Twelve). Malachi is the final book of the Nevi'im (the Prophets) in both categories.

Within the New Testament, a few divisions of the Hebrew Scriptures are given. One is found in Luke 24, the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms –

“These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the Prophets* and *the Psalms* concerning Me.” <sup>45</sup> And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” Luke 24:44, 45

Malachi, being the thirty-ninth and last book of the Old Testament, closes out the writings of the law. An interesting parallel between punishment and the law is thus made. In Deuteronomy 25:1-3, it says –

“If there is a dispute between men, and they come to court, that *the judges* may judge them, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, <sup>2</sup> then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt, with a certain number of blows. <sup>3</sup> Forty blows he may give him *and* no more, lest he should exceed this and beat him with many blows above these, and your brother be humiliated in your sight.” Deuteronomy 25:1-3

The Jewish practice was to never administer more than thirty-nine blows so that the law would never be violated. That is seen in 2 Corinthians 11:24, where Paul says, “From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one.”

As the law is a type of bondage because by law is the knowledge of sin (see John 8:33, Galatians 4:24, 25, etc.), the thirty-nine books of the law can be equated to a type of chastisement. Malachi completes this process. It is thus an exciting anticipation of the coming of the Messiah, who would take the burden of law off man and replace it with God's grace.

As far as when the book was written, there is scholarly dispute, and no precise dating for the book is given. External evidence about the prophet, his ministry, or surrounding historical events is not available.

Despite that, the words of Malachi point to it being written in the same general timeframe as the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. For example, in Malachi 1:8, the word *pekhhah*, governor, is used. Though it was used before the Babylonian exile, it is a word of Persian origin used in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Haggai when referring to those appointed over Judah. Malachi also uses it in this context.

Also, the Lord's words through Malachi come at a time of temple worship. Therefore, the temple of Zerubbabel, which dates to 515 BC, had to be standing. His words rebuke the people for their failing conduct concerning the temple and its sacrifices. This is a strong clue that the temple had been standing for some time.

Additionally, the words focus on some of the same issues found in Ezra and Nehemiah. Although these are failings that permeated Israel throughout its history, when taken in light of the first two points, it shows that the post-exilic nation was facing these failings consistently during this period.

**The Main Purpose:** In the first verse of the book, Malachi is stated to be the word of the Lord through Malachi. In it, the people are warned of their need to turn back to the Lord before the advent of the promised Messiah. It is the final warning from the Lord before His coming.

After Malachi, there are approximately four hundred years of no recorded prophetic utterances from the Lord. This is known as the Intertestamental Period. The next word from the Lord would be to Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist. John would be the one to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah, as prophesied in the final words from Malachi –

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet  
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.  
⁶And he will turn  
The hearts of the fathers to the children,  
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,  
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.” Malachi 4:5, 6

The layout and form of the book is a prophetic oracle which is didactic in nature, teaching a lesson based on a disputation. There is an assertion, then an objection, and finally a rebuttal. The Bible Project provides the following details –

“The book is designed as a series of disputes or arguments. Most sections begin with God saying something or making a claim or an accusation. This is followed by Israel disagreeing or questioning God’s statement. Finally, God will respond and offer the last word. This pattern repeats itself six times. In the first three disputes (chs. 1-2), God exposes Israel’s corruption, while in the final three (ch. 3), he confronts their corruption. The overall impression you get from reading these disputes is that the exile didn’t fundamentally change anything in the people. Their hearts are as hard as ever.”

The author of the book is Malachi. However, the name is the possessive form of the word *malakh*, messenger. Thus, *malakhi* means My Messenger. It is argued by some, therefore, that this is a title and not a name.

This is especially so because the name is not used anywhere else in Scripture. However, the term *malakhi*, My messenger, is used in Exodus 23:23, 32:34; Isaiah 42:19; and Malachi 3:1. Because of this, it has been argued without evidence that the author is Ezra.

As Malachi is the 39<sup>th</sup> book of the Old Testament, it is worthwhile to determine its significance from a numerical standpoint. It is derived from 3 x 13. Of the number three, Bullinger says –

“The number three, therefore, must be taken as the number of Divine fulness. It signifies and represents the Holy Spirit as taking of the things of Christ and making them real and solid in our experience. It is only by the Spirit that we realise spiritual things. Without Him and His gracious operation, all is surface work: all is what a plane figure is to a solid.”

Of thirteen, Bullinger says, “every occurrence of the number thirteen, and likewise of every multiple of it, stamps that with which it stands in connection with rebellion, apostasy, defection, corruption, disintegration, revolution, or some kindred idea.”

The two numbers beautifully define the last, and thus summary, words of the Old Testament. The final book of the law completes the divine fulness of the period of law, a time exactly marked with what defines the number thirteen.

As for the contents of Malachi, the book is comprised of 4 chapters totaling 55 verses. Malachi is cited in the New Testament gospels and by Peter and Paul. Jesus cites the words of Malachi in Matthew 11:10.

With this brief summary of the book complete, we can now begin to analyze it word by word, searching out what is on the mind of the Lord as He utters His final words to Israel before the time when His words begin to flow once again in the New Testament...

*Predestined by the Lord, but what does that mean?  
Is it all decided for us without a choice?  
What truths from the Bible about it can we glean?  
Are we on a set path without any voice?*

*What about the Edomite who joins to Israel?  
Was he forced by God apart from his will?  
And what about a person who receives Jesus? Do tell!  
Does forcing one's destiny give God a thrill?*

*Free to will or not, that is the question  
And it is not impossible to discern which is true  
To figure it out, I have a suggestion  
Read your Bible (and in context!) is what you should do*

## **II. And Esau, I Hate (verses 1-3)**

### **<sup>1</sup>The burden**

*masa* – “A lifting” The noun *masa* is derived from the word *nasa*, to lift. Thus, it is a lifting. For that reason, most translations say burden, which figuratively describes the thing lifted, it being heavy or a burden.

Others translate this as an oracle or prophecy, as a word that is lifted up. This is a paraphrase of the thought. Smith's Literal Translation says, “The lifting up of the word...” That verbally describes the matter, but – ironically – it is not literal.

Jerome says, “The word *massa* is never placed in the title, save when the vision is heavy and full of burden and toil.” Because of this, some scholars translate the word as a “sentence.” Lange adds to this thought and says –

“The connection in the first verse with *word* shows that it means something more, or it would have been superfluous. Eleven times in Isaiah ..., in Ezekiel 12:10; Hab. 1:1; Zech. 9:1; 12:1, it is followed by a prophecy of a threatening nature.”

Though a sense of weight is certainly what is being conveyed, it does not necessarily mean something threatening, even if a warning is implied. For example, the introductory words of Proverbs 30 note “the lifting” of the words of Agur.

Also, the introductory words of Proverbs 31 note a “lifting” of the words of King Lemuel. The word is used in 1 Chronicles 15 when referring to “the singing” of the Levites. It is a lifting to the Lord.

That this lifting is not necessarily to be taken as threatening will be especially noted a bit later. As for the word itself, this is the last use of *masa* in Scripture, as will be many of the uses of words in the book, simply because Malachi closes out the Old Testament canon.

Therefore, unless there is a particular reason to highlight a word, noting that it is the last use of it will not again be highlighted. This lifting now being noted is...

#### <sup>1</sup> (con't) **of the word of the LORD**

*davar Y'hovah* – “word Yehovah.” The fact that this is the word of Yehovah is immediately mentioned by the prophet. The *davar*, word, here signifies an utterance. It is the word of Yehovah. The first time the *davar*, word, of Yehovah is specifically noted in this manner is in Genesis 15:1 –

“After these things the word of the LORD [*davar Y'hovah*] came to Abram in a vision, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Abram. I *am* your shield, your exceedingly great reward.’”

The Lord was personally intervening through His word to the chosen man of God, Abraham. It is to Abraham that the promise of blessing was made and it was to his descendants after him that this promise would continue. This was specifically through the son of promise, Isaac, then to his son Jacob, and then to the twelve tribes that descended from him.

This *davar*, word, of Yehovah to and through this covenant people is the first connection back to the book of Genesis. As for the divine name Yehovah, the first use of it was in Genesis 2:4 –

“This *is* the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God [*Y’hovah elohim*] made the earth and the heavens.”

This is the second connection of the book back to Genesis. The God, Yehovah, who formed the heavens and the earth, is the same God who is monitoring the redemptive narrative that is currently being expressed to and through a particular people in this book. It is the Creator God and Covenant Lord who is the Source of the words that are conveyed...

### <sup>1 (con’t)</sup> **to Israel**

*el Yisrael* – “unto Israel.” The word of the Lord is given unto Israel. It does not say *al Yisrael*, (“upon Israel” meaning “against Israel”), as if they are such egregious offenders that they can immediately expect punishment for their ways. Instead, the words are direct but conciliatory while being mixed with warning.

Thus, the idea presented earlier, that this is a heavy burden of threatening, is not completely accurate. The words may be a burden, but they are words that are also mixed with an appeal for reason and watchful care.

As for the name, Israel is a line of people who descend from a man, Jacob, born of Isaac, and who was first called Israel in Genesis 32:28. It is the third connection to Genesis. From him came the twelve tribes of Israel, collectively known as Israel.

The name Israel is never applied to the church. Rather, a distinction is always made between the people of Israel and the Gentiles, including by Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles.

And yet, there is a joining of the Gentiles into the commonwealth of Israel, meaning the common blessings promised to Israel, as noted in Ephesians 2:12. Understanding the difference is important because the words of Malachi are written to the nation of Israel under the Old (Mosaic) Covenant.

The Gentiles of the world were never under the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant is fulfilled and ended through the work of Christ (Ephesians 2:15, Colossians 2:14, and

Hebrews 7:18, 8:13, and 10:9). As such, the words of Malachi, including verses constantly cited by pastors and preachers from Malachi 3:8-10 are not intended for the church.

The words of this book are given from the Lord...

<sup>1</sup> (con't) **by Malachi.**

*b'yad malakhi* – “in hand Malachi.” The words “in hand” mean that the Lord spoke through this person and he conveyed them under His authority as the Lord’s representative to the people of Israel. This is seen, for example, when the Lord spoke to Pharaoh *b'yad Mosheh*, “in hand Moses.”

This happens elsewhere, such as in Jeremiah 37:2, where it speaks of the words of the Lord, which He spoke *b'yad yirm'yahu*, “in hand Jeremiah.” Because of this, one would think that Malachi would be the name of the individual.

If not, it might be assumed that the Lord would say “His messenger” instead of “My messenger.” But there is a problem with this. There are no verbs in the verse. Without a verb to identify whether it is first person or third person, the matter cannot be sufficiently determined.

It simply says, “A lifting - word Yehovah unto Israel in hand Malachi.” Whether a name or a title, the lifting of the word of Yehovah begins with...

<sup>2</sup> **“I have loved you,” says the LORD.**

As will be the case with much of the book of Malachi, the verbs are in the perfect aspect: *ahavti etkhem amar Y'hovah* – “‘I loved you,’ said Yehovah.” Of all the things the Lord could have begun with to start the final book of the Old Testament, it is a remarkable statement.

Yehovah is speaking to Israel. His words are an assertion. Beginning at some point, Israel was loved, has been loved, and is loved. The word *ahav*, love, comes from a primitive root signifying to have affection for. It is a claim that the doting attention of Yehovah has been upon Israel.

Also, as will be the case each time the prophet notes the word of the Lord, it is in the perfect aspect. The Lord “said.” In essence, “The Lord has spoken, and I am conveying to you what He said.”

Despite His assertion, an immediate objection from the object of His affection is presented...

<sup>2</sup> (con’t) **“Yet you say, ‘In what way have You loved us?’**

*v’amartem bamah ahavtanu* – “And said, ‘In how loved us?’” One can see Israel, just like any of us when things aren’t going perfectly, questioning God’s love. Our spouse dies, and we question how God can love us. We lose our home, and we question how God can love us. We have an extremely bad day and we again question God’s love for us.

The people of Israel, swallowed up in self-misery over whatever is going on in their lives, question the Lord’s love for them. Although this is the Lord saying these things as if Israel were speaking, it is because He hears Israel moaning, and He returns their moaning back to them through the prophet.

But there had to be a basis for the people complaining that the Lord didn’t love them. First, one cannot love or hate unless he exists. To say that the Lord doesn’t love you implies that He exists.

Also, existence does not necessarily lead to ability. A rock exists, but it cannot love. Further, there must be an acknowledgment of some sort of connection between two entities for love to exist. My wife is Hideko. She loves me (well, most of the time). However, if I had never heard of her and she had never heard of me, I couldn’t say, “Hideko loves me.”

The Lord has established a baseline. He exists, Israel exists, both have the capacity to understand this, and both are aware of each other. He has claimed He loves Israel. Israel has heard this –

“The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples;  
<sup>8</sup> but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.” Deuteronomy 7:7, 8

Israel knew this and had heard it proclaimed. But that was not based upon a group of people suffering affliction under the hand of an oppressor. Such a situation had played out innumerable times elsewhere. Rather, that love already existed in the fathers. Later in Deuteronomy Moses refines what this means –

“The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as *it is* this day. <sup>16</sup> Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer. <sup>17</sup> For the LORD your God *is* God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. <sup>18</sup> He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. <sup>19</sup> Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. <sup>20</sup> You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name. <sup>21</sup> He *is* your praise, and He *is* your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen. <sup>22</sup> Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude.”

-Deuteronomy 10:15-22

Thus, the words *ahavti etkhem*, I loved you, are another link back to Genesis. The Lord selected the fathers to love them. That attentive love continued on from one generation to the next, but only in a particular line, as evidenced by the next words...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **Was not Esau Jacob's brother?"**

*halo akh esav l'yaaqov* – “Not brother, Esau, to Jacob?” This begins Yehovah's rebuttal to the objection. Esau is Jacob's twin older brother. The record of their birth is found in Genesis 25 –

“Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she *was* barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. <sup>22</sup> But the children struggled together within her; and she said, ‘If *all is* well, why *am I like* this?’ So she went to inquire of the LORD.

<sup>23</sup> And the LORD said to her:

‘Two nations *are* in your womb,  
Two peoples shall be separated from your body;  
*One* people shall be stronger than the other,  
And the older shall serve the younger.’

<sup>24</sup> So when her days were fulfilled *for her* to give birth, indeed *there were* twins in her womb. <sup>25</sup> And the first came out red. *He was* like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. <sup>26</sup> Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob. Isaac *was* sixty years old when she bore them." Genesis 25:21-26

The story of the twins was well known to Israel. It was a matter of historical record, and the two people groups continued to exist at the time of Malachi's prophecy. Despite that, both nations were destroyed by the Babylonians. Yehovah is using Edom as a lesson for Israel to learn from. As it next says...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **Says the LORD.**

*n'um Y'hovah* – "Utterance Yehovah." The word *n'um* signifies an utterance. It is an authoritative spoken expression, often in the form of a prophecy. In the case of the Lord, it is an utterance that bears all of the weight and authority of Yehovah.

He is declaring that Esau was, in fact, Jacob's brother in order to establish how Israel can know that He loves them. They both had the same grandfather, Abraham. They were conceived at the same time. And yet, even before they were born, Yehovah had selected and preferred Jacob above his older brother.

And more, the state of those two brothers, as realized in their descendants, was completely different. To continue making His argument in that respect, Yehovah, through His prophet, says...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **"Yet Jacob I have loved;**

Rather: *va'ohav et yaaqov* – "And I love Jacob." The verb is imperfect. Yehovah loves and continues to love Jacob. Nothing has changed in this relationship, even if many evils had fallen or continued to fall upon them. These were, according to all of the prophetic writings, self-inflicted wounds.

And yet, despite all of their failures and resulting judgments, God still loved Israel, symbolized by Jacob, the man, the younger twin to Esau. On the other hand...

<sup>3</sup> **But Esau I have hated,**

*v'eth esav saneti* – “And Esau, I hate.” The words are often twisted to mean something not intended. Esau here stands for the descendants of Esau. This does not mean that God hated Esau the twin of Jacob. That will become perfectly clear in the next clause.

The use of Jacob and Esau instead of Israel and Edom is intended to remind His audience of the fact that these two were brothers. One would think that they would both be treated in the same way, but that is not the case. Jacob was given the divine promise of the land of Canaan.

The Lord watched over them, established His covenant with them, brought them in, dwelt among them, etc. Esau did not receive this.

As for the word hate, Keil almost bizarrely says –

“The verbs אהב, to love, and שנא, to hate, must not be weakened down into loving more and loving less, to avoid the danger of falling into the doctrine of predestination. שנא, to hate, is the opposite of love. And this meaning must be retained here; only we must bear in mind, that with God anything arbitrary is inconceivable, and that no explanation is given here of the reasons which determined the actions of God.” Keil

The problems with this are several. First, the doctrine of predestination is stated by Paul to be a reality, being mentioned four times (Romans 8:29, 30, and Ephesians 1:5 & 1:11). How predestination is defined may be argued, but that it is a valid doctrine is evident from Paul’s writings.

Second, there is nothing arbitrary in degrees of love and hate. Examples of this permeate Scripture in both humans and in how God deals with the objects of His affection.

Third, it is also obvious from Scripture that God did not love every person in Israel, nor did He hate every person from Edom. And it is the nations, descending from these two, that are being addressed. Rather, as in English, there are varying degrees of what hate means. For example –

“And she will yet again conceive and bear a son, and she will say that Jehovah heard that I am hated, and he will give to me this also; and she will call his name Simeon.” Genesis 29:33

The word hate is being used comparatively. This continues in the New Testament with verses like Luke 14:26. Such is the same with the descendants of Jacob and Esau. If he hated Esau and all of his descendants, this would not have been included in the Law of Moses –

“You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he *is* your brother. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land. <sup>8</sup>The children of the third generation born to them may enter the assembly of the LORD.”

-Deuteronomy 23:7, 8

If they were brought into the nation of Israel, they would be of Israel. If the Lord loves Israel, then He loves those who descend from Edom who are of Israel.

Finally, to completely support this notion, we can turn to what happened to the nation of Edom. The name Idumea is the Greek form of the word Edom. They continued to exist as a people long after the time of Malachi.

Of them, the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus says in about 129 BC John Hyrcanus –

“...subdued all the Idumeans; and permitted them to stay in that country, if they would circumcise their genitals, and make use of the laws of the Jews; and they were so desirous of living in the country of their forefathers, that they submitted to the use of circumcision, and of the rest of the Jewish ways of living; at which time therefore this befell them, that they were hereafter no other than Jews.” Antiquities, Book 13 Chapter 9 Section 1

What this means is that the Edomites were brought into the nation of Israel, becoming Jews. This is no different than an Arab or a Japanese person today converting to Judaism. They become a part of the Jewish people.

Whether their origins are remembered and held against them by other supposedly pure-blooded Jews or not is irrelevant. They are now Jews. For example, Herod was an Idumean, meaning an Edomite, and yet he ruled Israel. Though still remembered for his ancestral connection, just as a Russian Jew is today, He was a Jew, nonetheless.

This is a historically established fact. But what happened to the Jews after the rejection of Jesus? They were destroyed as a nation and exiled around the world. This would have included all those of Edom who were assimilated into the Jewish nation.

As such, those same people, supposedly hated by Yehovah, are a part of the people still loved by Him today. They have been returned to their ancestral land for the completion of the redemptive narrative.

When the Bible speaks of Edom (or Moab, Philistia, etc.) in yet-future prophecy, it is not referring to the actual descendants of these people but those who live in the lands now occupied by them. In other words, the Sunni Arabs fill those lands. As such, the future prophecies of Edom, for example, are speaking of them.

Unfortunately, this has almost entirely escaped the attention of prophecy buffs and most scholars. Therefore, a great deal of confusion concerning peoples and nations has resulted. A good way of getting this quickly and simply is found in Ezekiel 38 –

“Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them *with* shield and helmet; <sup>6</sup>Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah *from* the far north and all its troops—many people *are* with you.” Ezekiel 38: 5, 6

“Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions will say to you, ‘Have you come to take plunder? Have you gathered your army to take booty, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder?’” Ezekiel 38:13

The battle being described in Ezekiel 38 is future to us now. And yet, some of these nations exist while others do not. Persia is Iran. Gomer, Togarmah, Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish no longer exist as nations, and yet the places still exist with different names.

Lastly, Ethiopia and Libya are identifiable with the general locations that existed eons ago. Most of these names go back to Genesis, showing that they were established by certain people groups which are still identifiable thousands of years later. Others are only identifiable by the location which was originally established by one people group or another.

Next to continue His thoughts concerning the descendants of Esau, Yehovah says...

<sup>3 (fin)</sup> **And laid waste his mountains and his heritage  
For the jackals of the wilderness.”**

*vaasim eth harav sh'mamah v'eth nakhalato l'thanoth midbar –*

“And set his mountains – a devastation.  
And his inheritance to jackals wilderness.”

Here we have another connection back to the book of Genesis. Esau was first identified with a particular location, Seir, as recorded in Genesis 32 –

“Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom.” Genesis 32:3

Genesis 36 gives the genealogical record of Esau, who is Edom. Later, the Lord confirms Esau’s ownership of the land –

“And command the people, saying, ‘You *are about to* pass through the territory of your brethren, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. Therefore watch yourselves carefully. <sup>5</sup>Do not meddle with them, for I will not give you *any* of their land, no, not so much as one footstep, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau *as* a possession. <sup>6</sup>You shall buy food from them with money, that you may eat; and you shall also buy water from them with money, that you may drink.’” Deuteronomy 2:4-6

Despite having given Mount Seir, meaning the land of Edom, to Esau, the Lord has the right to end that. And yet, the land is still known to Him as Edom. To this day, despite being a part of the nation of Jordan, the Bible still refers to it as Edom in its future prophecies.

At the time of the descendants of Esau possessing it, however, the Lord noted that it was laid waste and was a place for the howling of the jackals. As for the *tannah*, here called a jackal, it is an unusual form of a word that is found only elsewhere in Lamentations 4:3.

Several older versions, such as the KJV, erroneously call these dragons, implying a reptile. This is incorrect. In Lamentations, it says that they offer their breasts to nurse their young. Reptiles do not have mammary glands and do not nurse their young.

The word is the feminine of *tan*, a jackal. As such, it is specifically referring to the female jackal. The reason for specifying the female is certainly the same as that in Lamentations, where the milk of the female jackal is contrasted to the painful thirst of the children of Israel during its siege.

Edom has no home. His land is given over to the female jackal who has it as a home to raise her young.

With that, the verses are done for the day. The words of the last Old Testament book make connections all the way back to the first book of the Bible. And more, they are intricately connected to so much else within Scripture.

The Bible is an intricate tapestry of information that deals with real events that have taken place in history. They center on a particular group of people in a particular land as it awaits the coming of their promised Messiah.

And yet, Scripture also deals with peoples and places at the furthest parts of the earth as they interact with the Creator of the universe through the coming of His Christ.

The Bible is not a word far out of reach. Rather it is intimate and interactive. But it will have no meaning or a very wrong sense for those who do not carefully read it and prayerfully contemplate it. We have entered into Malachi in order to see what it details.

May we carefully continue to look at every minute detail while at the same time considering it from a larger perspective as it interacts with all of the rest of the Bible. In doing so, it will help unlock truths found in Scripture that will then allow us to understand what it is God is telling us about His wonderful works among Israel and in the giving of His Son for all the people of the earth.

**Closing Verse:** *“Egypt shall be a desolation,  
And Edom a desolate wilderness,  
Because of violence against the people of Judah,  
For they have shed innocent blood in their land.*

*<sup>20</sup> But Judah shall abide forever,*

*And Jerusalem from generation to generation.*

*<sup>21</sup> For I will acquit them of the guilt of bloodshed, whom I had not acquitted;  
For the LORD dwells in Zion.” Joel 3:19-21*

**Next Week:** Malachi 1:4-8 *If you don't treat the Lord with respect, you will be a goner...*  
(Where Is My Honor) (2<sup>nd</sup> Malachi Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He has sent His Messenger to carry the good news to all people. Jesus! God promised,

and God delivered. The time of the law is ended and grace has come. Praise God for Jesus.

### **Malachi 1:1-3 (CG)**

A lifting - word Yehovah unto Israel in hand Malachi.

<sup>2</sup> “‘I loved you,’ said Yehovah.

And said, ‘In how loved us?’

‘Not brother, Esau, to Jacob?’

Utterance Yehovah.

‘And I love Jacob.

<sup>3</sup> And Esau, I hate,

And set his mountains – a devastation.

And his inheritance to jackals wilderness.”

### **Malachi 1:1-3 (NKJV)**

The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.

<sup>2</sup> “I have loved you,” says the Lord.

“Yet you say, ‘In what way have You loved us?’

*Was* not Esau Jacob’s brother?”

Says the Lord.

“Yet Jacob I have loved;

<sup>3</sup> But Esau I have hated,

And laid waste his mountains and his heritage

For the jackals of the wilderness.”

## **MALACHI 1:4-8 (WHERE IS MY HONOR?)**

The clock didn't work on sermon typing morning. Therefore, I didn't get up until about 4:15. Because of this on a normal sermon typing day, I would be pretty late in getting finished – even more late than usual.

However, an analysis of the style of presentation of the Lord's word in Malachi doesn't require as much difficult contemplation as in the other books we have gone through. So, even for a regular sermon typing day, I was done quite early.

The prophetic words still bear the weight and authority of the word of the Lord. They are to be evaluated carefully, considered prayerfully, and contemplated in a manner that will lead us to a more perfect understanding of the nature of the Lord.

They reveal to us His covenant-keeping nature, His directive hand in human affairs, and His expectations for those who are His people (whether they actually are or simply claim to be).

In these verses, the Lord uses Esau, the people, and Edom, their land, as examples of His hand against those who are prideful and arrogant towards His decisions. But His own people who stand before Him are not exempt from His directive hand of attention, both in a positive and a negative way.

**Text Verse:** *“For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. <sup>31</sup> For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. <sup>32</sup> But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.”*

*-1 Corinthians 11:30-32*

The idea of the Lord's chastening is found throughout Scripture. In Deuteronomy 8:5, He says to Israel, “You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you.” The words are singular, “You, Israel.”

That premise remains true for them to this day. Israel is an adopted son to the Lord. A son is chastened when He does wrong, and Israel has done wrong continuously. Their greatest wrong was rejecting Christ Jesus when He came.

And yet, instead of destroying them as a nation, the Lord has chastened them for two millennia. This doesn't mean that all in Israel have been saved. Rather, only those who have received Jesus have been saved. However, as a corporate body, they have continued.

Those in the church are now sons of God through adoption. When we stray, we will receive chastening in an attempt to correct our conduct. However, it should be taken as an axiom that not all in the church are saved. There is the true church of believers, among whom are many who have never believed.

As long as we process such thoughts properly, our doctrine on matters of salvation will be aligned with Scripture. We may assume that Israel gets some sort of exception to God's plan of salvation through Christ, but that would be erroneous.

Or we might get the idea that because we are born into a Christian home, we, too, are Christians. Pay attention to what the Bible says. In failing to do so, an eternity of difference may be ahead for yourself or others.

Such truths as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. The Territory of Wickedness (verses 4, 5)**

**<sup>4</sup> Even though Edom has said,**

The words at first appear to be gender confused: *ki tomar edom* – For says (fem. sg.) Edom." The words are those of the land (Edom). Even if Edom the man is a masculine entity, the land (the inheritance of verse 3), which stands as the subject, is feminine as if she is a mother of the inhabitants. As such, it is as if the land is calling out on behalf of her people. Concerning Edom's words...

**<sup>4 (con't)</sup> "We have been impoverished,  
But we will return and build the desolate places,"**

*rushashnu v'nashuv v'nivneh khoravoth* – "Demolished! And return, and build wastelands." Here is a word found just twice in Scripture, *rashash*. It signifies to beat down and thus to demolish. Impoverished would be the result of the action, not the action itself.

As for their words, they are the response to the destruction of the land of Edom by the Lord –

<sup>3</sup>“And Esau, I hate,  
And set his mountains – a devastation.  
And his inheritance to jackals wilderness.”

<sup>4</sup>“For says Edom,  
‘Demolished! And return, and build wastelands.’”

The Lord states that He is ultimately the Force behind the destruction of Esau’s land. It was seen previously that the Lord gave the land of Seir to Esau and his descendants –

“And command the people, saying, ‘*You are about to* pass through the territory of your brethren, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. Therefore watch yourselves carefully. <sup>5</sup>Do not meddle with them, for I will not give you *any* of their land, no, not so much as one footstep, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. <sup>6</sup>You shall buy food from them with money, that you may eat; and you shall also buy water from them with money, that you may drink.’” Deuteronomy 2:4-6

If the Lord gave, it was His right to dispense with it as He chose. Edom was devastated, and the people were exiled. This was the Lord’s doing. But as an act of defiance against His judgment, Edom proudly boasted, “Yeah, it’s demolished, but we will prevail! We will return to our land, and we will reestablish it from the wastelands that have arisen in place of our home.”

Because of this, the Lord continues with His own proclamation against their boastful words...

<sup>4</sup> (con’t) **Thus says the LORD of hosts:**

**“They may build, but I will throw down;**

*koh amar Y’hovah ts’vaoth hemah yivnu vaani eheros –*

“Thus said Yehovah Sabaoth:  
‘They build, and I raze.’”

Here, the title Yehovah Sabaoth is introduced into the book of Micah. It will be used eight times in this chapter and twenty-four times in the book. It is derived from the verb *tsava*, to mass as an army or servants. Thus, Lord of Hosts expresses the idea well.

The words were in the singular, speaking of Edom as a single entity. Now, they go to the plural and refer to the people who comprise Edom.

Yehovah doesn't dispute the fact that the people will return. In fact, the words presuppose it. They will build. Only something that is built can be razed. Edom had no prophecies of a permanent inheritance as Israel did. They had no prophecies that they had a future as a people for a set purpose, such as bringing forth the Messiah.

Yehovah had given the land to them. Now He had taken it away. Their attempts to regain and reestablish the land would be frustrated. The Pulpit Commentary notes –

“I will throw down. Edom never recovered its power; it became the prey of the Persians, the Nabatheans, the Jews under the Maccabees, the Macedonians, the Romans; and finally the Mohammedan conquest effected its utter ruin.”

The words here are similar to what transpired in the kingdom of Israel –

“The Lord sent a word against Jacob,  
And it has fallen on Israel.  
<sup>9</sup> All the people will know—  
Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria—  
Who say in pride and arrogance of heart:  
<sup>10</sup> ‘The bricks have fallen down,  
But we will rebuild with hewn stones;  
The sycamores are cut down,  
But we will replace *them* with cedars.’  
<sup>11</sup> Therefore the Lord shall set up  
The adversaries of Rezin against him,  
And spur his enemies on,  
<sup>12</sup> The Syrians before and the Philistines behind;  
And they shall devour Israel with an open mouth.  
For all this His anger is not turned away,  
But His hand *is* stretched out still.” Isaiah 9:8-12

The Lord pronounced judgment against the northern kingdom of Israel. They were crushed and exiled according to the word of the Lord against their conduct. But in their arrogant pride, they claimed they would possess the land and build it. Without a word from the Lord for it to be so, it was not to come about.

To this day, there is the same ongoing problem in the land of Israel. The West Bank area is contested land. That will not change until the time the Lord determines it. Thousands of years later, the overpowering influence of the Lord's decisions remains.

As for Edom, despite claiming they would rebuild, the Lord said He would also raze. As such...

<sup>4</sup> (con't) **They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness,**

The words continue in the plural: *v'qaru lahem g'vul rishah* – “And called to them Territory Wickedness.” In Numbers 20:23, it says, *g'vul erets edom*, “border land Edom.” A border defines what lies inside of it. In the case of the people's efforts to be reestablished against the will of the Lord, they will be called *g'vul rishah* – “Territory Wickedness.”

The words are based upon the defiance of the people against the will of the Lord. It is an act of wickedness, and thus, the territory is defined by their act.

The short book of Obadiah was written as a prophecy against Edom. As Jacob was being destroyed for rebellion against the Lord, Edom rejoiced over it and assisted in the ruin of the people. But Edom was a brother to Jacob. This was a great offense to the Lord, and their misdeeds would be remembered by Him.

“For the day of the Lord upon all the nations *is* near;  
As you have done, it shall be done to you;  
Your reprisal shall return upon your own head.

<sup>16</sup> For as you drank on My holy mountain,  
So shall all the nations drink continually;  
Yes, they shall drink, and swallow,  
And they shall be as though they had never been.” Obadiah 1:15, 16

Therefore, the curse is pronounced against them...

<sup>4</sup> (con't) **And the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever.**

*v'haam asher zaam Y'hovah ad olam* – “And ‘the people whom frothed Yehovah until vanishment.’” The word *zaam* signifies to foam at the mouth. Thus, one can easily get the sense. It is as if Yehovah’s mouth has frothed at them in anger and fury.

This anger was directed at those of Edom who presumed to stay and rebel against Him through their prideful resistance to His will. They were the object of His disfavor and raging anger. As a nation, they would never cease to be the object of His wrath. However, as individuals, this is not necessarily the case, nor can it be inferred.

This is the opposite of how many in the church consider Israel today. They accept the nation of Israel as a legitimate entity because God prophesied that they would be reestablished. However, they then equate this favor to all Jews, as if every one of them is accepted by God because they are in the land God promised them.

The idea is perverse. The abominations carried out within Israel by many today are like Sodom and Gomorrah. The Lord neither approves of them nor their actions. The Lord’s favor or enmity toward a national entity does not logically follow to all of its citizens.

As for Israel and the lesson they is being taught through Edom...

**<sup>5</sup>Your eyes shall see,**

*v'enekhem tirenah* – “And your eyes see.” He is speaking to the people of Israel in the plural. They will see what the Lord has done to Edom, just as He prophesied. As such...

**<sup>5 (con't)</sup>And you shall say,**

**‘The LORD is magnified beyond the border of Israel.’**

Rather: *v'atem tomru yigdal Y'hovah me'al ligvul Yisrael* –

“And you say,  
‘Magnified, Yehovah, from upon to border Israel.’”

The border of Edom is being contrasted with the border of Israel. The words “from upon to border” do not mean “beyond the border.” Rather, they are speaking of Israel’s state—

“And called to them Territory Wickedness.”  
“Magnified, Yehovah, from upon to border Israel.”

While the land of Edom was frustrated in the peoples' attempts to reestablish themselves in their land, having its name instead called Wickedness, Israel was reestablished, retaining its name and national identity. In this, Israel magnified Yehovah's name because the contrast was so evident.

In other words, this is not merely a contest between people groups. A distinction is being set forth concerning who those people groups are directed by. This can be seen, for example, in 2 Chronicles 25 –

“Now it was so, after Amaziah came from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the people of Seir, set them up *to be* his gods, and bowed down before them and burned incense to them. <sup>15</sup>Therefore the anger of the LORD was aroused against Amaziah, and He sent him a prophet who said to him, ‘Why have you sought the gods of the people, which could not rescue their own people from your hand?’” 2 Chronicles 25:14, 15

Amaziah had foolishly rejected the Lord through his actions. What good were Edom's gods if they couldn't prevail in battle against Israel?

The ultimate point of everything that Scripture details is the glorification of Yehovah Elohim, the Lord God. He is the Creator, the Establisher of Israel, and the only true God. Even if Edom and Israel appear to be the subjects of the discourse at times, it is ultimately the Lord, His power, and His directive hand that are being highlighted.

Though nothing explicit is stated here, it is still an implicit reference to Genesis, where the Lord God spoke the universe into existence and directed the line of humanity according to His purposes, such as calling Abraham, selecting Isaac, and choosing Jacob, who is Israel.

That same Directive Force is being highlighted well over a millennia later, and it returns us to the thought of Genesis 25, where Yehovah said to Rebekah that two nations were in her womb and that the two peoples would be separated from her body.

However, despite this promise of the Lord that Israel would see these things and magnify His name, that was not yet the case. That is seen in the words of the next verse...

*What is this you have brought before Me?  
What makes you think your offering is ok?*

*The “Jesus” you proclaim is one of apostasy  
He is a defective “savior.” You have followed the wrong way*

*My Son is pure and holy. He is undefiled  
In Him there is no blemish or defect  
Through Him alone, I would have on you smiled  
But through any other, you I will surely reject*

*Be sure the offering is right – Jesus!  
Open the Bible and there He is on full display  
When You get it right, you will get your A+  
So call on Him, and believe the true gospel today!*

## **II. The Table of the LORD Is Contemptible (verses 6-8)**

**<sup>6</sup>“A son honors *his* father,  
And a servant *his* master.**

As with verse 2, Yehovah begins this section with another assertion. This will be followed by an objection from Israel which will then receive a rebuttal from Yehovah. However, this directed assertion is to the priests in particular. It begins with a statement of how things normally are.

*ben y’khaved av v’eved adonav –*

“Son honors father,  
And servant his master.”

In normal human conduct, a son treats his father with respect, complies with his wishes, does as he is directed, and so forth. The same is true with how a servant likewise is expected to treat his master.

The father is the one who raised the son, fed him, protected him, provided for his needs, etc. A servant is housed, fed, and his needs are tended to according to the hand of his master. These things are expected to result in honoring the father or master.

Yehovah had done these things for Israel since their inception. Despite this, there was not a reciprocation from them...

<sup>6</sup> (con't) **If then I am the Father,  
Where *is* My honor?**

The words bear emphasis: *v'im av ani ayeh kh'vodi* –

“And if Father, I –  
Where My honor?”

The “if” is not a question. Even without a verb, the mood is conditional and yet adamant. “I am a father to you. As such, where is the honor I am to be given as is the case with any normal human conduct?”

The Father/son relationship between Yehovah and Israel was clearly set forth in His words to Pharaoh –

“Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Israel *is* My son, My firstborn. <sup>23</sup> So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.’”” Exodus 4:22, 23

But this is not just Israel as a nation only. Rather, the idea of sonship extends to individuals –

“You *are* the children of the Lord your God; you shall not cut yourselves nor shave the front of your head for the dead. <sup>2</sup> For you *are* a holy people to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who *are* on the face of the earth.” Deuteronomy 14:1, 2

As this is the case, the Lord wants to know why He is not treated with the respect due to a Father. And more...

<sup>6</sup> (con't) **And if I *am* a Master,  
Where *is* My reverence?**

Not one out of the almost sixty versions I checked translates these words correctly: *v'im adonim ani ayeh morai* –

“And if Lords, I –  
Where My fear?”

The word Lords, *adonim*, is plural while the emphatic “I” is singular. This is the only time in Scripture this occurs when Yehovah refers to Himself. The job of translators is to translate, letting the chips fall where they may. This, unfortunately, is not always the case.

Not translating it in the plural does a disservice to the Lord who gave the word to the priests of Israel and to us. We are the recipients of the word. But as Sergio noted when I told him about this error, “It’s the herd mentality. I bet that’s why so many translators make the same mistakes.”

This cannot be speaking of the priests as lords of Israel. The same emphatic I that follows the previous clause eliminates any such attempt to finagle that scenario. The Pulpit Commentary considers this to be a majestic plural, like the word *elohim*. But there is nothing to suggest this and no precedent for it elsewhere. Rather, John Gill says—

“...the word is in the plural number, and may be understood of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit; though the first Person [I] seems rather designed, who stands in this relation to Christ, as Mediator; to the angels, his ministering spirits; to the ministers of the Gospel, and to all the saints; and indeed to all men, and particularly to the Israelites; as appeared by the special laws and commands he enjoined them, and by his special government, protection, and care of them.”

It is hard to think of any better reason for this enigma, especially when Yehovah says this in Malachi 3:1 –

“Behold, I send My messenger,  
And he will prepare the way before Me.  
And the Lord, whom you seek,  
Will suddenly come to His temple,  
Even the Messenger of the covenant,  
In whom you delight.  
Behold, He is coming,  
Says the Lord of hosts.”

Obviously, this is looking back on what is presented with a knowledge of the coming of Christ, who is the Lord. But still, only five other times is *ha’adon*, the Lord, used. They are all in Isaiah, and they each clearly refer to the Lord God of Hosts, Yehovah Sabaoth. That is again seen right here in the next words...

<sup>6</sup> (con't) **Says the LORD of hosts**  
**To you priests who despise My name.**

*amar Y'hovah ts'vaoth lakhem ha'kohanim boze shemi* – “Said Yehovah Sabaoth to you, the priests, disesteeming My name.” The assertion is specifically said to be from Yehovah Sabaoth, and it is directed at the priests of the Mosaic Covenant. The ultimate assertion is that they disesteem His name.

As the mediators between the people and Yehovah, what they do will be a reflection of how they consider Him. Therefore, the Lord finds their actions wholly inappropriate. No father deserved such treatment from a son, and no lord would allow it from a servant.

But with complete disrespect for their God, whom they were called to serve on behalf of the people, they ignorantly question Him with their objection...

<sup>6</sup> (con't) **Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?'**

*vaamartem bameh vazinu eth sh'mekha* – “And said, ‘In what we disesteemed Your name?’” They ridiculously claim that they are completely unaware of their crimes against the Lord. And yet, they are the stewards of the word of the Lord and the administrators of the covenant as set forth in the word.

Their actions in the service of the Lord were inappropriate and they either knew it or they should have known it. Either way, the Lord, through Malachi, speaks His mind...

<sup>7</sup> **“You offer defiled food on My altar,**

The words form the rebuttal to the objection, and yet they also form the next assertion that will be objected to: *magishim al mizb'khi lekhem m'goal* – “Approaching upon My altar bread defiled.” The word *lekhem*, bread, does not literally mean bread. At times, bread stands for any food, but to show a precedent for this –

“They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, because they present the offerings by fire to the LORD, the food [lekhem] of their God; so they shall be holy.” Leviticus 21:6

As for the word *gaal*, defiled, it is not used in the books of Moses regarding food. However, it is expressed in this manner in Daniel –

“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile [*gaa/*] himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile [*gaa/*] himself.”

-Daniel 1:8

The thought here is not unlike that in the narrative of Cain and Abel –

“Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. <sup>3</sup> And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. <sup>4</sup> Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup> but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.” Genesis 4:2-5

Hebrews 11 explicitly tells us that Abel’s offering was one of faith. It wasn’t the type of offering but the heart behind the offering that made it acceptable. In the case of the priests, their offerings may have been the right type, but it will be seen they are in the wrong condition.

Such actions by the priests indicated that their conduct was not of faith. If they believed the Lord would see, they would not offer as they did. Thus, an implicit reference to the priests’ conduct being like that of Cain’s is being highlighted.

As the Old Testament is closing out, the same attitude of the first recorded person to be born to Adam is reflected in the priests of Israel. Despite this, the priests object...

<sup>7</sup> (con’t) **But say, ‘In what way have we defiled You?’**

*vaamartem bameh gealnukha* – “And said, ‘In what defiled You?’” The obvious connection of the defiling of the altar to the Lord must be highlighted –

“Approaching upon My altar bread defiled.”

“In what defiled You?”

To defile the altar with that which is defiled is to defile Yehovah, who receives those offerings from the altar. Such a comparative analogy is provided by Jesus –

“Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? <sup>20</sup> Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. <sup>21</sup> He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in

it. <sup>22</sup> And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.” Matthew 23:19-22

The rebuttal to their objection is next provided...

<sup>7</sup> (con't) **By saying,  
'The table of the LORD is contemptible.'**

*b'emarkhem shulkhan Y'hovah nibzeh hu* – “In your saying, ‘Table, Yehovah – disesteemed it.’” It is an analogy of conduct being equated to words. The priests would never openly say this. They got their livelihood from the people’s offerings. If they were to say this, the people would simply give up on their offerings.

Rather, the actions of the priests speak louder than whatever words they uttered. As for the word table, it is used in Ezekiel in this manner –

“They shall enter My sanctuary, and they shall come near My table to minister to Me, and they shall keep My charge.” Ezekiel 44:16

It is as if the Lord descends to the altar to sit and feast among the people. However, the priests were defiling the offerings and calling His table contemptible through their actions. These things are next explained by Him...

<sup>8</sup> **And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice,  
Is it not evil?**

There is a strong emphasis in the words with the use of a paragoge which is then answered with an emphatic statement, not a question, from the Lord: *v'khi taqishun iver lizboakh ein ra* – “And when (surely) approach blind to sacrifice – ‘Not evil!’”

The paragoge highlights the attitude of the action. The priests willfully and purposefully give the blind as a sacrifice, something forbidden by the law –

“All the firstborn males that come from your herd and your flock you shall sanctify to the Lord your God; you shall do no work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock. <sup>20</sup> You and your household shall eat *it* before the Lord your God year by year in the place which the Lord chooses. <sup>21</sup> But if there is a defect in it, *if it is lame or blind or has any serious defect*, you shall not sacrifice it to the Lord your God.” Deuteronomy 15:19-21

The priests were commanded to inspect the animals to ensure against the sacrifice of a defective animal. This could not be allowed because each sacrifice presented to the Lord was given in type of the all-perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the unblemished offering of Himself to God.

This willful violation of the law is equated to a verbal exclamation from the priests, “Not evil!” It is the exact sentiment that brought about the exile of the people. Isaiah told them –

“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;  
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;  
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” Isaiah 5:20

These priests were purposefully violating the law they were to minister before the people. In accepting a defective sacrifice, the people saw this and had the thought instilled in them that Yehovah was not holy or to be treated with the absolute respect He deserved.

This attitude toward the Lord is reflected in the words, “Table Yehovah – disesteemed it!” It is the same word, *bazah*, that is used to describe Jesus in Isaiah 53 –

“He is despised [*bazah*] and rejected by men,  
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.  
And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him;  
He was despised [*bazah*], and we did not esteem Him.” Isaiah 53:3

The attitude of the people towards the Lord Jesus was the same as the attitude of the people towards the Lord’s table. Both were highlighted by the priests’ attitude toward him. Understanding that, it next says...

<sup>8 (con’t)</sup> **And when you offer the lame and sick,  
*Is it not evil?***

*v’ki tagishu piseakh v’kholeh ein ra* – “And when approach lame and rubbed – ‘Not evil!’” These were likewise forbidden to be presented to the Lord –

“And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the Lord, to fulfill *his* vow, or a freewill offering from the cattle or the sheep, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it. <sup>22</sup> Those *that are* blind or broken or

maimed, or have an ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the Lord, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> Either a bull or a lamb that has any limb too long or too short you may offer *as* a freewill offering, but for a vow it shall not be accepted. You shall not offer to the Lord what is bruised or crushed, or torn or cut; nor shall you make *any offering of them* in your land. <sup>25</sup> Nor from a foreigner's hand shall you offer any of these as the bread of your God, because their corruption *is* in them, *and* defects *are* in them. They shall not be accepted on your behalf." Leviticus 22:21-25

This was explicit within the law, but the priests didn't want to lose out on their portion of the offerings. And so they compromised in order to benefit from what was defective.

Concerning the word *kholeh*, it is literally translated as "rubbed." If something is rubbed, it will become worn. The idea is that which is weak, sick, or afflicted. Yehovah, Israel's God, was offered such shameful offerings. And yet, He next says...

<sup>8 (con't)</sup> **Offer it then to your governor!**

The word translated as "offer" here is a different word but with a similar meaning: *haqrivehu na l'phekhathekha* – "Near it, I pray, to your governor!" Depending on when Malachi was recorded, this could be referring to anyone from Nehemiah, as noted in Nehemiah 5:14, to Zerubbabel in Haggai 1:1. Or it could be someone else who was filling that position.

Israel had no king at this time, nor would they ever again, with the exception of Jesus, whom they rejected. To this day, Jesus is the King of Israel, though He is not the King in Israel. The *pekhah*, or governor, is a word of foreign origin. After the exile, it was probably used by the foreign rulers over Israel to designate the one who would govern the land on their behalf.

The point of Yehovah's words to the priests is that this governor would be displeased to have a defective animal presented to him. That is clearly indicated in the next words, which beg a negative response...

<sup>8 (fin)</sup> **Would he be pleased with you?  
Would he accept you favorably?"  
Says the LORD of hosts.**

*hayirskha o hayisa phanekha amar Y'hovah ts'vaoth* –

“He accept you or lift faces you?’  
Said Jehovah Sabaoth.”

Obviously he would be displeased with such an offering. And yet, the priests were accepting defective offerings from the people and presenting them to God. The thinking is twisted and demented.

And this is just what our thinking is concerning God without knowing Him as He is. Man’s understanding of God has been so twisted and convoluted throughout the nations and over the millennia that apart from the Bible, there is almost no understanding of Him at all.

Things can be inferred about Him from the world around us. The creation will give anyone a general knowledge of Him if they simply apply their minds to what they see. But to know Him specifically apart from Scripture has been lost.

The stories of the past were handed down by Noah and his sons to their children. This can be inferred from the legends and tales that have been discovered in many societies. It can be inferred from Job’s understanding of the Lord as well.

However, that knowledge eventually corrupted to the point where God had to intervene in human affairs once again. In selecting Israel, He kept proper knowledge of Himself going. But even that was all but forgotten for a time, as will be evidenced in our closing verse.

An entire nation of people had almost completely forgotten the ways of the Lord. They had a system set up for the worship of Him, but that degraded into generalities. They had the words of the prophets, but they also were infected with false prophets.

Do you think that you can rely on churches to keep you on the right path? Do you think the word of a pastor or priest will keep you from straying? That will only be true if the church is teaching the truth or if the pastor is rightly dividing the word of God.

But you can’t really know those things without checking for yourself. Israel had a religion, religious leaders, and even prophets. And yet, they had completely lost the proper worship of the Lord until they came across a forgotten book.

Be sure not to let that happen to yourself and those you love. Be sure the Jesus you are following is the One the Bible proclaims. Read it daily, prayerfully, and with the intent of

finding Him and holding fast to Him all your days. May it be so, to the glory of our supremely wonderful God. Amen.

**Closing Verse:** *“Then Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, ‘Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.’ And Shaphan read it before the king.*

*<sup>11</sup> Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, that he tore his clothes. <sup>12</sup> Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Michaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, <sup>13</sup> ‘Go, inquire of the Lord for me, for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is aroused against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.’” 2 Kings 22:10-13*

**Next Week:** Malachi 1:9-14 *Let us to the Lord sing! Give it a try..* (For Great King, I) (3<sup>rd</sup> Malachi Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He has sent His Messenger to carry the good news to all people. Jesus! God promised, and God delivered. The time of the law has ended, and grace has come. Praise God for Jesus.

### **Malachi 1:4-8 (CG)**

<sup>4</sup> “For says Edom,  
‘Demolished! And return, and build wastelands.’”  
“Thus said Yehovah Sabaoth:  
‘They build, and I raze.  
And called to them Territory Wickedness,  
And “the people whom frothed Yehovah until vanishment.”  
<sup>5</sup> And your eyes see,  
And you say,  
‘Magnified, Yehovah, from upon to border Israel.’”  
<sup>6</sup> ““Son honors father,  
And servant his master.  
And if Father, I –  
Where My honor?  
And if Lords, I –  
Where My fear?’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth to you, the priests, disesteeming My name.’”

And said, 'In what we disesteemed Your name?'  
<sup>7</sup> 'Approaching upon My altar bread defiled.  
And said, 'In what defiled You?'  
In your saying, 'Table, Yehovah – disesteemed it.'  
<sup>8</sup> 'And when (surely) approach blind to sacrifice – "Not evil!"  
And when approach lame and rubbed – "Not evil!"  
Near it, I pray, to your governor!  
He accept you or lift faces you?'  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth."

### **Malachi 1:4-8 (NKJV)**

<sup>4</sup> Even though Edom has said,  
"We have been impoverished,  
But we will return and build the desolate places,"  
Thus says the Lord of hosts:  
"They may build, but I will throw down;  
They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness,  
And the people against whom the Lord will have indignation forever.  
<sup>5</sup> Your eyes shall see,  
And you shall say,  
'The Lord is magnified beyond the border of Israel.'  
<sup>6</sup> "A son honors *his* father,  
And a servant *his* master.  
If then I am the Father,  
Where *is* My honor?  
And if I *am* a Master,  
Where *is* My reverence?  
Says the Lord of hosts  
To you priests who despise My name.  
Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?'  
<sup>7</sup> "You offer defiled food on My altar,  
But say,  
'In what way have we defiled You?'  
By saying,  
'The table of the Lord is contemptible.'  
<sup>8</sup> And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice,  
*Is it* not evil?  
And when you offer the lame and sick,

*Is it not evil?*

Offer it then to your governor!

Would he be pleased with you?

Would he accept you favorably?"

Says the Lord of hosts.

## **MALACHI 1:9-14** **(FOR A GREAT KING, I)**

There are times when my mind will stop whatever I am considering and mull the greatness of who Jesus is. It often happens right while I am closing up a sermon or at some other point when the fact that Jesus is God comes to the forefront of my attention.

It is so hard to actually grab on to this idea that the thoughts are not expressible in words. Even though the Bible tells us that God came in human flesh, and the way it came about is clearly stated in Luke 1:35, it is still something that defies proper description.

Mary was told that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and the power of the Highest would overshadow her. And yet, how can we conceive of the infinite God of the universe uniting with humanity? It's like considering the moment of creation: there was nothing and suddenly everything in an instant.

There was no time, and then time began passing. There was no space, and suddenly it existed. There was nothing solid, but then everything we are, everything we see, and everything that exists was there. How did things go from the first state to the next?

We know it happened, and we know that God did it. The Lord God is, and He is great. That is what Malachi tells the people of Israel. And yet they treated Him with absolute contempt in their conduct.

Jesus is the Lord God. Though there is the physical aspect in Jesus the Man, and there is the eternal, all-powerful, and all-knowing aspect of His deity. The Power behind creation and our continued existence is the same Power that united with humanity. And yet, how do we treat Him? Would Malachi's words to Israel be even partly true of us in our conduct toward the Lord?

**Text Verse:** *"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, <sup>23</sup> that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him."* John 5:22, 23

The people and priests of Israel defiled the name of the Lord. They treated it contemptuously, failing to honor Him as their Sovereign. When Jesus came, they did the same to Him. They rejected Him and have suffered the punishment they deserve for this

betrayal of the Lord their God. In failing to honor Him, they failed to honor the Father who sent Him.

But the “Christian” world has been no better. There are people walking around in poofy hats and flowing vestments who prey on little children, sleep with the wives of their congregants, and defile themselves and the name of the Lord through their actions, while pretending that they are holy to the Lord.

Televangelists enrich themselves with millions of dollars while spewing out cliches and false promises, ensnaring the people they should be leading to a right knowledge of the word.

And the people who accept these things are no better in their attitude towards the Lord. They are looking for easy religion that will never provide them with a sound understanding of Him and what He expects.

We all know that sound theology is hard work. Sunday mornings are not meant to add to the already long work weeks we have to go through, right? Our conduct and actions toward the Lord are dismissive of the fact that Jesus is God and that He is a great King.

May we make every effort to acknowledge Him with the honor and respect He is due. It is a certain truth that is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. Shut the Double-Doors (verses 9-11)**

<sup>9</sup> **“But now entreat God’s favor,**

*v’atah khalu na phene el* – “And now, rub, I pray, faces God!” The same word just used in verse 8 is used again –

“And when approach lame and rubbed [*khalah*] – ‘Not evil!’”

“And now, rub [*khalah*], I pray, faces God!”

It is debated whether this is actually a call for turning and entreating God or whether it is an ironic statement contrasting what has just been said. The latter seems more likely, and that is how I translated it. The priests were shoving defective sacrifices in the face of God, thus treating Him as defective, unworthy of proper sacrifice and offering.

The irony, then, is to be a tool of learning. Rather than offer a rubbed (meaning a defective) sacrifice to the Lord, the priests are being shown that they are to do the opposite. They are to rub (meaning entreat as if stroking) God's faces and thus His favor. One can see the intent of this word from other passages, such as Daniel 9:13 –

“as it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil hath come upon us, and we have not appeased [*khalah*: to rub] the face of Jehovah our God to turn back from our iniquities, and to act wisely in Thy truth.”

Further, notice that in Malachi's words it says “God,” not “Yehovah.” Yehovah is God, but the priests have denied this through their conduct, treating Him shamefully. The word “God” is thus set in opposition to “governor” of the previous verse –

“Near it, I pray, to your governor!”  
“And now, rub, I pray, faces God,”

Who is greater? The governor appointed over the land by a foreign ruler, or God who governs all things according to His infinite wisdom? They would never think of treating a human governor with such disrespect.

Therefore, the priests should do their utmost to appease God through careful and attentive priestly conduct, and yet they have not. The irony continues with...

<sup>9</sup> (con't) **That He may be gracious to us.**

*Vikhanenu* – “And He favors us?” Malachi includes himself among the collective people known as Israel. The priests represented all of them. How could the people receive God's grace when they were treating Him with contempt?

Obviously, grace means getting what you do not deserve and so one could argue that this isn't grace at all. But it is the priests who are the mediators between God and Israel. How does God pour out His grace on us now? Through our Mediator, Jesus –

“And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.” John 1:16

One can see, then, that the grace must come through the right actions of the representatives of the people. This is why it said this to the priests in Numbers 6 –

“Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them:

<sup>24</sup> “The Lord bless you and keep you;

<sup>25</sup> The Lord make His face shine upon you,  
And be gracious to you;

<sup>26</sup> The Lord lift up His countenance upon you,  
And give you peace.”

<sup>27</sup> So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.”

-Numbers 6:23-27

With that, a parenthetical thought is next expressed...

<sup>9</sup> (con’t) **While this is being *done* by your hands,**

The words “your hand” are to be taken emphatically: *miyedkhem hay’tah* – “(From your hand became this!)” The Lord, through Malachi, states that this is just what the priests have been doing. They were responsible as the representatives of the people to administer the priestly functions of the Law of Moses. And yet, the Lord is charging them with violating it through their abominable treatment of Him before the people.

How can they pronounce a priestly blessing upon the people if they are disparaging the One who is the Subject of the blessing? Why would the Lord even consider blessing them through the lifting of their wicked hands?

To understand what is going on, think of any church in the world today not adhering to what the word says. They teach a false doctrine, and yet they petition the Lord to bless the people. They appoint adulterers, women, homosexuals, transsexuals, etc., as their leaders, contrary to the word, and yet they expect the Lord to look with favor upon them.

The priests of Israel were appeasing their governor, but they were unwilling to please their God. But more, they were shoving their conduct right in His face. Pastors and preachers appease the government through their wicked appointments, and yet by their actions, they shove the grace of Christ right back in the face of God. When they do this, the ironic question is asked...

<sup>9</sup> (con’t) **Will He accept you favorably?”**

**Says the LORD of hosts.**

*zoth hayisa mikem panim amar Y'hovah ts'vaoth –*

“Lifts from you faces?  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

The words mean, “Will He find you acceptable?” They are either speaking of the priests or the people in general. My guess is it is directed to the priests. Malachi included himself, and thus all the people, in a previous clause. Here, the words are in the second person.

As such, he is saying that the Lord will not accept the priests. That, in turn, means He will not accept the people. Next, Malachi again affixes the Source of His words to them, “Yehovah Sabaoth has spoken. I am conveying His words to you now.” With that, the word of the Lord to the priests continues...

<sup>10</sup> **“Who is there even among you who would shut the doors,**

*mi gam bakhem v'yisgor d'lathayim –* “Who also in you, and shut double-doors!” The meaning, although debated, is probably a wearied exclamation, “O! Won’t one of you priests just shut the temple doors?” The Lord is completely fed up with them and their conduct.

It would be better for them to just shut the temple than to have to put up with their abominable conduct and worthless sacrifices. This reprehensible thought takes the reader back to the conduct of the priests before they were exiled –

“For our fathers have trespassed and done evil in the eyes of the Lord our God; they have forsaken Him, have turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the Lord, and turned *their backs on Him*. <sup>7</sup> They have also shut up the doors of the vestibule, put out the lamps, and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the holy *place* to the God of Israel. <sup>8</sup> Therefore the wrath of the Lord fell upon Judah and Jerusalem, and He has given them up to trouble, to desolation, and to jeering, as you see with your eyes. <sup>9</sup> For indeed, because of this our fathers have fallen by the sword; and our sons, our daughters, and our wives *are* in captivity.” 2 Chronicles 29:6-9

The priests abandoned the temple, shutting it up, and neglected their duties given according to the Law of Moses. This was one of the causes of all of the trouble and distress that had fallen upon the people of Judah.

And yet, the Lord now says that He would rather be neglected by the priests than be served by them with their contemptible offerings. With the doors shut, it would preclude them from going in and conducting their abhorrent affairs, including...

**10 (con't) So that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain?**

*v'lo tairu misb'khi khinam* – “And no light my altar gratuitously!” The word *khinam* means gratis, without charge. Thus, they were entering the temple and lighting the incense altar – a picture of petitioning God through prayers for the people – in a manner that was wholly inappropriate and, as the NKJV rightly paraphrases it, in vain.

To avoid this, because the Lord would not respond to their prayers, He simply tells them to shut the double-doors and not come into His presence to petition Him. This is because...

**10 (con't) I have no pleasure in you,”  
Says the LORD of hosts,**

*ein li khephesh bakhem amar Y'hovah ts'vaoth* –

“‘Not to Me pleasure in you.’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

What good would it be for the priests, the mediators of the covenant, to light the twice daily incense before the Lord? They had made themselves unacceptable to Him. In not accepting them, He would not welcome or receive their mediation on behalf of the prayers of the people, represented by the incense. And more...

**10 (con't) “Nor will I accept an offering from your hands.**

*u-minkhah lo ertseh miyedkhem* – “And present – no accept from your hand.” The *minkhah*, or present (as in presenting an offering) refers to the grain offering of Leviticus 2 –

“When anyone offers a grain offering to the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it. <sup>2</sup>He shall bring it to Aaron’s sons, the priests, one of whom shall take from it his handful of fine flour and oil with all the frankincense. And the priest shall burn *it as* a memorial on the altar, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.” Leviticus 2:1, 2

Frankincense was added to this offering from the people. Thus, there was the sense of asking for favor on behalf of the people who offered. However, this was not accepted. Because the priests were defiled through their conduct, the people were not accepted through the priestly mediation.

Imagine it! Offering a defiled Jesus to God. But this is essentially what churches do when they ignore His word and claim they are petitioning God through Him. They defile what Jesus represents. Thus, the Lord will not accept their perverted version of Jesus. This is reflected in the words of Paul –

“For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!”

-2 Corinthians 11:4

People go to churches where another, a false, Jesus is on prominent display, and yet they put up with it. When a church ignores what the word says that church ignores what God has instructed. Their Jesus is not the Jesus described in the word, and God will not hear them when they call out to Him. Their gifts have been defiled by those who are supposed to proclaim Jesus as God has instructed.

The priests of Israel were defiling the people before God because they and their actions were defiled. They made the name of the Lord ignoble. In contrast to that...

**<sup>11</sup> For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down,  
My name *shall be* great among the Gentiles;**

*ki mimizrakh shemesh v'ad m'voo gadol sh'mi bagoyim –*

“For from ascension sun, and until his descension,  
Great My name in the Gentiles.”

Verse 11 has only two verbs, both in the participle form. The intent of them must be obtained from the surrounding context. Are they referring to the present or the future? They must be future. The words clearly anticipate the dispensation of grace, the ending of the Mosaic code, the inclusion of Gentiles in proper worship of God, and so much more.

In the time of Malachi, under the dispensation of the law, the temple in Jerusalem was to be the sole place for the worship of the Lord –

“Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; <sup>14</sup> but in the place which the Lord chooses, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.” Deuteronomy 12:13, 14

This was said to be the place even for Gentiles who sought the Lord –

“Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who *is* not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for Your name’s sake <sup>42</sup> (for they will hear of Your great name and Your strong hand and Your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, <sup>43</sup> hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as *do* Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name.” 1 Kings 8:41-43

Some Jewish and Christian commentators claim that because of what Malachi is saying, that the name of the Lord was already held in esteem by the nations of the world somewhat in a manner of Job. This is entirely incorrect.

Even in the New Testament, Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:20 that the worship of the Gentiles, apart from coming to faith in Jesus, was not conducted in an acceptable manner to the Lord.

Rather, the words of this verse are set in contrast to the conduct of the priests in the temple where the Gentiles were to come and discover the proper worship of the Lord.

This system, set up and designed to anticipate the coming Messiah in every detail, had failed to produce anything but apostasy by the people. Its rites and rituals would end and a new form of worship “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23, 24), would come about.

As for Job, he lived at the tail end of a time when knowledge of the true God and the promise of His coming Messiah remained, passed down from the times of Noah. That worship was being lost and so the Lord called Israel to preserve those things until the time for Messiah was realized.

During this time, the world fell into a complete lack of proper worship of the Lord. Israel alone preserved this knowledge for a set duration. That time was to end with the coming of Jesus...

**11 (con't) In every place incense shall be offered to My name,**

*uv'khal maqom muqtar mugash lishmi* – “And in every place, incense approached to My name.” This is not to be taken literally, as in the RCC and other such churches. The “incense” that is offered is Jesus, the type anticipating the Antitype.

To fully understand this and all of the beautiful pictures involved in the incense, your homework for tonight is to go back and watch the Superior Word sermon on Exodus 30:22-38 (The Holy Anointing Oil and the Holy Incense).

The offering of Jesus will be acknowledged throughout the Gentile world. Thus, it is as if the incense that anticipated Him is being offered. Further...

**11 (con't) And a pure offering;**

*uminkhah t'horah* – “And present, pure.” In contrast to the defiled offerings of the priests of Israel, and like the incense, the *minkhah* offered by the Gentiles will be considered pure and acceptable. This is because Jesus is the fulfillment of every detail of the Levitical grain offering.

As additional homework for you tonight, please be sure to watch the Superior Word sermon Leviticus 2:1-16 (The Grain Offering). The type was given in anticipation of the Antitype, Jesus. It is through Him that the greatness of God is exalted...

**11 (con't) For My name shall be great among the nations,”  
Says the LORD of hosts.**

*ki gadol sh'mi bagoyim amar Y'hovah ts'vaoth* –

“‘For great My name in the Gentiles,’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

In Genesis 4, it says –

“And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. <sup>4</sup> Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup> but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.”

-Genesis 4:3-5

The rejection of Cain’s offering and the acceptance of Abel’s is not because of the type of offering. Both are noted as a *minkhah*. The reason for the difference is explained in Hebrews 11:4, saying, “By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.”

Abel had faith in what he presented to the Lord. Cain did not. The priests, if they had faith, would have aligned their sacrifices and offerings in accord with the law that mandated them. An offering of Jesus, meaning the true Jesus, is one of faith in Jesus.

People can and do go to church while not believing a thing. Others offer a false Jesus to God. Some just offer lip service to Him. But for those who have faith in Jesus as recorded in Scripture, their offering is that which exalts Yehovah Sabaoth.

Throughout the entire Gentile world, the message of Jesus, when properly presented, has been received by the Gentiles and it has brought honor to God, just as our text verse today says. Israel, however, contrasts how the Gentiles would exalt the name of the Lord...

*Sweet smelling spices combined into one  
To make a holy incense for Me  
Every detail points to the coming Christ, My Son  
This is the reason for such specificity*

*The work that He will do is revealed in each sweet smell  
And the salt speaks of Him, and His work also  
Every detail has a wondrous story to tell  
Ponder each, and their meaning you will know*

*Look into these things as recorded for you  
Consider them and take each to heart  
In so doing, a marvelous sight comes into view  
Wonderful things will this precious word to you impart*

## II. Behold! What Distress (verses 12-14)

<sup>12</sup> **“But you profane it,  
In that you say,**

*v’atem m’khal’lim otho beemarkhem* – “And you pierce it in your saying.” The word is *khalal*, to bore or pierce. It is a word that can have several meanings based on the context. In this case, it would signify to wound or even kill.

In other words, this is contrasted to the Gentiles exalting the name of the Lord, making it great. Rather than that, the priests of Israel essentially slaughter it. They do this by saying...

<sup>12</sup> (con’t) **‘The table of the LORD is defiled;**

*shulkhan Adonay m’goal hu* – “Table Adonai – defiled it.” The thought being presented returns and expands upon the thought from the previous sermon of verses 1:7, 8 –

“‘Son honors father,  
And servant his master.  
And if Father, I –  
Where My honor?  
And if Lords, I –  
Where My fear?’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth to you, the priests, disesteeming My name.’  
And said, ‘In what we disesteemed Your name?’  
<sup>7</sup> ‘Approaching upon My altar bread defiled.  
And said, ‘In what defiled You?’  
In your saying, ‘Table, Yehovah – disesteemed it.’  
<sup>8</sup> ‘And when (surely) approach blind to sacrifice – “Not evil!”  
And when approach lame and rubbed – “Not evil!”  
Near it, I pray, to your governor!  
He accept you or lift faces you?’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

In this first clause, through their actions, they have made the table of the Lord, His altar, where He symbolically feasts upon their sacrifices, defiled.

When someone brings something unacceptable before the Lord as an offering, it is as if the priests actively call out, “Don’t worry about it. At least it’s not a pig. Just toss it on the altar. The Lord doesn’t care! By the way, if you have a pig, toss it on too. After all, the Lord has said ‘...every beast of the forest *is Mine!*’ (Psalm 50:12). He really doesn’t care!”

Their unholy attitude continues with the next words...

<sup>12</sup> (con’t) **And its fruit, its food, *is contemptible.***’

*v’nivo nivzeh akhlo* – “And His produce – disesteemed His food.” The word is *nov*, produce, coming from *nuv*, to germinate. Fruit doesn’t really give the sense because it refers to what is placed upon the altar. Things were prepared, such as the grain offering with the frankincense.

This was then burnt to the Lord as His food. But through their conduct and actions, they had rendered this produce, which was to be the Lord’s food, as disesteemed. And more...

<sup>13</sup> **You also say,  
‘Oh, what a weariness!’**

*v’amartem hineh mat’laah* – “And say, ‘Behold! What distress!’” The word is a noun found only here in Scripture, *mat’laah*. It is derived from *mah*, what or how, and *t’laah*, distress. That, in turn, comes from *laah*, to tire.

The priests considered their jobs as menial and degrading. They had to make the same offerings every morning and every evening to the Lord. They had other sacrifices and offerings to make as required by the law and as necessitated by whatever circumstances brought them about.

If the priests believed they were offering these things to the Lord, they would treat their duties as an honor. But their attitude was that their offerings were required by Moses, not the Lord who spoke through Moses.

Believing they are unobserved will eventually wear out the priests from doing repetitive and seemingly menial tasks. Thus, their actions are those of men lacking faith. This was their job. No person saw whether they did it well, and so they trudged along from day to day, uncaring about how they performed it. And more...

13 (con't) **And you sneer at it,"**  
**Says the LORD of hosts.**

*v'hipakhtem oto amar Y'hovah ts'vaoth –*

“And puffed it,  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

The sense is that of the priests doing their jobs while exhaling through their lips,  
“bpbpbpb! Man, this is such tedious, boring work. Why was I born in the line of  
Aaron? I need a day off... one that lasts forever.”

Adam Clarke and others take this to refer to the food rather than the duties. This is  
because the priests participated in eating many of the sacrifices and offerings of the  
sanctuary. Because of this, Clarke says the puff is “A metaphor taken from cattle which  
do not like their fodder. They blow strongly through their nose upon it; and after this  
neither they nor any other cattle will eat it.”

It is a possibility, but why anyone would puff at the pay they received, unless they were  
complaining about the amount, seems hard to reconcile. That would be the one thing  
about the job that was actually rewarding.

Rather, the context appears to refer to their duties and how they conducted them,  
completely lacking faith that they had any effect at all in pleasing the Lord they may or  
may not actually believe in. That continues to be seen with...

13 (con't) **“And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick;**

*v'havetem gazul v'eth ha'piseakh v'eth hakholeh –*

“And brought plucked, and the lame, and the rubbing.”

The word *gazul* signifies to pluck off. It is something seized away, torn away, robbed,  
and so forth. According to Leviticus 6, when something was stolen, it was to be restored  
and a fifth more of its value was to be given to the person from whom it was stolen.

The priests were to ensure the Lord was not robbed, and yet, they not only ignored the  
theft, but they willingly presented it to the Lord. They also brought offerings that were

lame. As seen last week, this was a direct violation of the law. They also brought the *khalah*, that which is rubbed. It is the same word used in verses 8 and 9.

The Lord is incredulous and exclaims...

<sup>13</sup> (con't) **Thus you bring an offering!**

*v'havethem eth ha'minkhah* – “And brought the present!” Despite what is being offered being completely contemptible and in total violation of the law, it is brought forward as an offering to the Creator God, Israel’s Redeemer. The Lord, through Malachi, thus asks...

<sup>13</sup> (con't) **Should I accept this from your hand?”**

**Says the LORD.**

*haertseh othah miyedkhem amar Y'hovah* –

“‘Accept it from your hand?’

Said Yehovah.”

The question demands a negative response. Verse 1:8 asked if the governor would be pleased with them or accept them over such an offense. How much more should the King of the Universe despise their offerings and reject such people who would presume to treat Him so shamefully?

In these words, the actions not only include the priests who accept the offerings, but the people who have brought them forward. It was the priests’ job to ensure that what was brought was according to the law, but the people would know very well what most of the requirements were before coming forward with their offerings. This continues to be seen in the next words...

<sup>14</sup> **“But cursed *be* the deceiver**

**Who has in his flock a male,**

**And takes a vow,**

**But sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished—**

*v'arur nokhel v'yesh b'edro zakhar v'noder v'zoveakh mashkhath ladonay* –

“And cursed defrauding,  
And is in his flock male,  
And vowing,  
And sacrificing ruined to Adonai.”

The word *nakal* signifies to defraud. Such a person is cheating the Lord of his rightful due according to the precepts of the law. The violation is two-fold. First, when one made a vow, he was to present a male. Second, it was to be without any defect.

However, the implication of these words is that there is a male in the flock that is acceptable for a vow but that the ruined animal is a female. However, the law would accept neither –

“Speak to Aaron and his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, who offers his sacrifice for any of his vows or for any of his freewill offerings, which they offer to the Lord as a burnt offering— <sup>19</sup> *you shall offer* of your own free will a male without blemish from the cattle, from the sheep, or from the goats. <sup>20</sup> Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf. <sup>21</sup> And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the Lord, to fulfill *his* vow, or a freewill offering from the cattle or the sheep, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it.” Leviticus 22:18-21

The one vowing would know he had a better animal in the flock. The priest may not know that, but he would know that a female was not acceptable as a vow. Thus, at a minimum, there is guilt by the giver for being stingy and presumptuous, and the priest was guilty of accepting a ruined animal and a female.

This attitude was completely unacceptable. Unlike a governor who was merely a man and one who was appointed by a human king of a Gentile nation that the people would have despised, the Lord is God...

<sup>14</sup> (con’t) **For I *am* a great King,”  
Says the LORD of hosts,**

The words are emphatic: *ki melekh gadol ani amar Y’hovah ts’vaoth* –

“For King great, I,  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

As with each such proclamation, the words from Malachi are stated as an authoritative fact that the Lord said (it is in the perfect aspect). Yehovah has emphatically proclaimed His greatness. He is not just a king, but He is great and worthy of respect, reverence, and appropriate sacrifices and worship. Further...

<sup>14 (fin)</sup> **“And My name *is to be* feared among the nations.**

*ushmi nora bagoyim* – “And My name feared in the Gentiles.” Like in verse 11, the verb is a participle. Whether this is in accord with a future proclamation (shall be feared), or whether the Lord is contrasting the attitude of Israel to the current state of the Gentile world who had come to fear Yehovah, either way, it is a truth.

The Lord’s name would be feared among the Gentiles through the exaltation of Jesus. But even at Malachi’s time, the Lord’s name was feared among the Gentiles. In Daniel 6, King Darius said –

“I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom *men must* tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.” Daniel 6:26

Darius lived from 522 BC until 486 BC. Thus, it was after the time of the return of the exiles with Ezra in 538 BC and not long before the time of Malachi. The fear of Yehovah among the Gentiles would have been remembered, even if He was not properly worshipped at that time. But how quickly Israel, who was the center of His attention, forgot the greatness of their true King.

Because of their unholy and contemptible attitude, Adam Clarke rightly says –

“It was high time to break up this corrupt service; and after this time God does not appear to have paid any regard to it, for he sent them no other prophet.”

Malachi called out to the people concerning their conduct. He will continue to do so for three more chapters. But after that, no further word from the Lord would be forthcoming until the time when the priest Zechariah would be told of the birth of his son, John. It is he who would be the one to prepare the way of the Lord, the great King of Israel.

Only in honoring the Son do we honor the Father. This is because, as Jesus said in John 14:10, “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?” Jesus and the Father are One. Jesus is He who reveals the unseen Father to us.

As difficult as it is for humans to get their minds around this, it is what the Bible proclaims. The unseen God, who was able to simply speak everything we behold into existence, was willing to unite with His creation in order to return us back to Himself.

The humility of His incarnation, the stresses of His life, and the brutality of His death were all deemed as acceptable to God to purchase us from the power of the devil. We exist in the presence of absolute holiness and infinite greatness. How can we do anything but be fearful and have reverence for this great King?

**Closing Verse:** *“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.*

<sup>8</sup> *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” Revelation 1:7, 8*

**Next Week:** Malachi 2:1-9 *I have kept it, but the went awry (My Covenant With Levi) (4<sup>th</sup> Malachi Sermon)*

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He has sent His Messenger to carry the good news to all people. Jesus! God promised, and God delivered. The time of the law has ended, and grace has come. Praise God for Jesus.

### **Malachi 1:9-14 (CG)**

<sup>9</sup> *“And now, rub, I pray, faces God!*

*And He favors us?*

*(From your hand became this!)*

*He lifts from you faces?’*

*Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”*

<sup>10</sup> *“Who also in you, and shut double-doors!*

*And no light my altar gratuitously!*

*Not to Me pleasure in you.’*

*Said Yehovah Sabaoth.*

*‘And present – no accept from your hand.’”*

<sup>11</sup> *“For from ascension sun, and until his descension,*

*Great My name in the Gentiles.*

*And in every place, incense approached to My name,*

*And present, pure.*

For great My name in the Gentiles,  
Said Jehovah Sabaoth.”

<sup>12</sup> “And you pierce it in your saying,  
‘Table Adonai – defiled it,  
And His produce – disesteemed His food.’

<sup>13</sup> And say, ‘Behold! What distress!’  
And puffed it,  
Said Jehovah Sabaoth.

And brought stripped, and the lame, and the rubbing.  
And brought the present!  
Accept it from your hand?’  
Said Jehovah.”

<sup>14</sup> “‘And cursed deceiving,  
And is in his flock male,  
And vowing,  
And sacrificing ruined to Adonai.  
For King great, I,’  
Said Jehovah Sabaoth.  
‘And My name feared in the Gentiles.’”

### **Malachi 1:9-14 (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup> “But now entreat God’s favor,  
That He may be gracious to us.  
*While* this is being *done* by your hands,  
Will He accept you favorably?”  
Says the Lord of hosts.

<sup>10</sup> “Who *is there* even among you who would shut the doors,  
So that you would not kindle fire *on* My altar in vain?  
I have no pleasure in you,”  
Says the Lord of hosts,  
“Nor will I accept an offering from your hands.

<sup>11</sup> For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down,  
My name *shall be* great among the Gentiles;  
In every place incense *shall be* offered to My name,  
And a pure offering;  
For My name shall be great among the nations,”  
Says the Lord of hosts.

<sup>12</sup> “But you profane it,  
In that you say,  
‘The table of the Lord is defiled;  
And its fruit, its food, *is* contemptible.’  
<sup>13</sup> You also say,  
‘Oh, what a weariness!  
And you sneer at it,”  
Says the Lord of hosts.  
“And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick;  
Thus you bring an offering!  
Should I accept this from your hand?”  
Says the Lord.  
<sup>14</sup> “But cursed *be* the deceiver  
Who has in his flock a male,  
And takes a vow,  
But sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished—  
For I *am* a great King,”  
Says the Lord of hosts,  
“And My name *is to be* feared among the nations.

## **MALACHI 2:1-9 (MY COVENANT WITH LEVI)**

The address to the priests in today's verses is direct and, well, scary. If you actually believe that the word is from the Lord, then it logically follows that you believe in the Lord. Words don't come from nowhere. Rather, they indicate an intelligence is behind them.

Such intelligence is seen in the sequencing of DNA. There is coded information in DNA that isn't simply linear. It isn't even three-dimensional. Rather, it is four-dimensional. DNA builds things into three dimensions, but it does so at preprogrammed times. As such, the dimension of time is a part of the process.

This sequencing is thus far beyond anything man has even come close to accomplishing. We can preprogram things to occur at certain times, but we have no ability to have things write their own timing programs, setting their own conditions to do things as they go along. We can write code, and whatever instructions are in the code, that is what it will do.

As for the word given by the Lord. Unless one believes the Lord is somehow fickle or incompetent, then that person would be an absolute fool to intentionally reject what He says and go do his own thing.

Despite that, we all do this at one time or another to some degree. That isn't what I'm talking about concerning the absolute fool (even if it is absolutely foolish).

The priests of Israel were the stewards of the law. They had the responsibility to do what the law said and to instruct it to others. And yet, they completely rejected the premise behind doing those things, which is to honor the Lord who sanctified them.

Concerning this precept, the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary says, "The priests in particular are reprov'd, as their part was to have led the people aright, and reprov'd sin, whereas they encouraged and led them into sin. Ministers cannot sin or suffer alone."

When I read that, it (as it should) put the fear of God in me. I am not only responsible for my own actions, but what I do (preach, teach, advise, etc.) in regard to the word of God bears upon each person I interact with in this way.

For me to teach incorrectly, if unintentional, is something I shouldn't do and yet it may not be considered absolutely foolish. Through misunderstanding, misinterpretation, a lack of thorough study, etc., I would be guilty, and I would then be judged for that, according to James 3:1. But for me to intentionally lead others astray through purposeful manipulation of the word would certainly make me an absolute fool.

God will not be mocked (Galatians 6:7). He will hold us accountable for the things we say and do. For ministers of His word to purposefully ignore or manipulate it, I cannot think of a more terrifying place to be.

Think about that and then think of what is going on in churches all over the world. Just a day before I typed this sermon, I was sent an article entitled, *Chicago Pastor: Ruth and Naomi Were in a Lesbian Sexual Relationship*.

He claimed that Ruth seduced Boaz after getting him drunk because she needed a sperm donor. From there, he suggested that anyone who taught differently probably doesn't read the Bible. This person is, without any contestation, an absolute fool.

**Text Verse:** *"...holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict." Titus 1:9*

The Hebrew of today's passage is, at times, extremely precise, and poorly translated by most and analyzed incorrectly by innumerable scholars. You will see this as well. However, most translators and scholars have simply misunderstood what is being conveyed and presented their work with the right intent, even if the result is wrong.

When I first translated the passage, after I finished evaluating the verses, I made corrections to the final translation. These were because there has to be a right understanding of the rest of the Bible to clearly see what the Lord is telling us.

Many of my thoughts and translations are quite different than what you may have previously read and that means that either I have wrongly evaluated what is being said or they have done so. I find it scary because when I present my sermons to you, it is with the intent that the information is exactly right.

I know that I will have to face the Lord and give an account for what I have done. Because of this, you can rest assured that I would never willingly present an inaccuracy. But I still ask you to consider each sermon or study and verify the information.

The word is too precious not to have this attitude from each of us. We are even shown this in today's passage. Great things, such as rightly presenting the word of God to His people are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. The Life and the Peace (verses 1-5)**

**<sup>1</sup>“And now, O priests, this commandment is for you.**

*v'atah alekhem ha'mitsvah hazoth ha'kohanim* – “And now, unto you, the commandment, the this, the priests.” There are at least two possibilities concerning the meaning of commandment. The first is a literal commandment, as in, “You are commanded to do this.”

The second is that the word is being used as a decree. Thus, it would mean something like, “This is the decree against you, O priests.”

If the former, then the words are looking to the next verse which says, “To give honor to My name.” The meaning would then be the priests are being commanded to amend their ways and do their obligation as priests who minister before Yehovah.

If the latter, it would mean something like, “If you don't give glory to My name, I decree the following against you.” Both are possible, and scholars come down dogmatically on one side of the debate or the other. Simply because the word generally signifies a commandment, the first option seems fitting. This is because it goes back to the very inception of the priesthood –

“Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. <sup>2</sup>So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. <sup>3</sup>And Moses said to Aaron, ‘This is what the Lord spoke, saying:

“By those who come near Me  
I must be regarded as holy;  
And before all the people  
I must be glorified.”

So Aaron held his peace.” Leviticus 10:1-3

There was no explicit commandment to Aaron before the death of his sons, and yet, it was understood from their consecration as priests that they were to be considered holy. If they were holy, then Yehovah, who made them holy, was to be glorified as such.

Everything about their ordination, from their garments to the food they were given, set them apart to the Lord. And yet, throughout Israel's history, the priests continually failed to maintain the dignity of their office. In so failing, they failed to glorify Yehovah.

A classic example of this is found during the time of the Judges and the punishment upon the men is not unlike that promised to the priests in the verses ahead –

“Then the Lord said to Samuel: ‘Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. <sup>12</sup> In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. <sup>13</sup> For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. <sup>14</sup> And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.’” 1 Samuel 3:11-14

The sons of Eli had disgraced the priesthood by treating the offerings of the Lord as contemptible (1 Samuel 2:12-17). In turn, they brought contempt upon the name of the Lord. Eli, the high priest, did not restrain them, and so the family was cut off from the priesthood for their failings. With this understood as the likely meaning of “the commandment,” Yehovah, through Malachi next proclaims...

**<sup>2</sup> If you will not hear,  
And if you will not take *it* to heart,**

*im lo tishmeu v'im lo tasimu al lev* – “If not hear! And if not set upon heart!” The word *im*, if, cannot mean a conditional “If you will do this, then I will do that.” It is beyond that point as will be seen in the clauses ahead. Rather, the if is an affirmation that means something more like “as.” The Lord is saying, “As you will not hear! And as you will not take it to heart!”

To hear means more than hearing an audible sound. The meaning extends to obedience, such as, “As you will not hearken to my words.” The priests had been given their instructions and they were to faithfully apply them to their lives. Because they did not, and because they did not mentally acknowledge the commandment of the Lord (set upon heart), there were to be consequences.

As noted, their conduct was to be based upon the commandment, which is...

<sup>2 (con't)</sup> **To give glory to My name,”  
Says the LORD of hosts,**

*latheth kavod lishmi amar Y'hovah ts'vaoth –*

“To give honor to My name,’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

The word is *kavod*, the same word used in Malachi 1:6, where the Lord asked, “Where My honor?” It literally means “weight,” as in something heavy. We use the same terminology today when we speak of words or a matter being weighty and thus important.

This is what the Lord called for in Leviticus 10 at the death of Aaron’s sons where the verb form of this word is used. The Lord is telling the priests that they are accountable to bring Him the honor He is due. If they fail to conduct their duties in accord with that premise, they will be held accountable...

<sup>2 (con't)</sup> **“I will send a curse upon you,**

Rather: *v'shilakhti vakhem eth ham'erah –* “And sent in you the execration.” The word is *meerah*, an execration. It is not simply “a curse,” but “the execration.” It means an angry denouncement. It is not used as a verbal attack levied at someone. It is a word against a person, his livelihood, his possessions, his family, etc. The exact phrase is used in Deuteronomy 28:20 –

“Will send, Yehovah, in you (sg., meaning Israel), the execration [*ham'erah*], the confusion, and the rebuke in all outstretching your hand which doing until you destroyed, and until you perish quickly from faces badness your deeds which forsaken Me” (CG).

Thus, this is a general denouncement of the livelihood and state of existence of the priests. The verb being in the perfect aspect (sent) means that it is a done deal. There is no way around it. As you have failed in your duties, I sent upon you the execration...

<sup>2 (con't)</sup> **And I will curse your blessings.**

*v'arothi eth birkhotehem* – “And execrated your blessings.” Again, the verb is in the perfect aspect. As for what “your blessings” is referring to, some think it is speaking of the active vocal blessings of the priests upon others, such as the priestly blessing of Numbers 6, where it says for the priest to pronounce, “The Lord bless you,” etc. This seems forced, but it is possible.

The other possibility, which seems the natural consequence of the execration is the temporal blessings of the priesthood. This would follow with Deuteronomy 28 where the people could expect good or evil based upon their conduct.

In leading the people astray, the priests would suffer along with the people as Yehovah brought the execration upon them. Thus, it would be inclusive of, but not limited to, the blessings of the priests upon the people. Understanding that, it next says...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **Yes, I have cursed them already,**

*v'gam arothiha ki* – “And also execrated it.” In other words, the execration is already pronounced. As the verb is singular (execrated it), it means that the previous clause is parenthetical –

“And sent in you the execration.  
(And execrated your blessings.)  
And also execrated it.”

This analysis is bucking against translations that say something like “I have cursed them” and against scholars who say something like “The suffix ... is to be taken distributively: ‘each particular blessing’” (Keil).

In other words, the singular “it” is not speaking of the execration but of all of the blessings in the singular.

I disagree. The Lord sent the execration by execrating the blessings, and then He emphatically affirms that He has execrated the execration. This is actually confirmed by the use of the word in just this manner in the next chapter –

“In the execration, you execrated.  
And Me you robbing,  
The nation – it all.” Malachi 3:9

And all of this is...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **Because you do not take *it* to heart.**

*ein'khem samim al lev* – “For naught you setting upon heart!” This takes us right back to the first two clauses: “If not hear! And if not set upon heart!” As noted, I said that the “if” was not conditional but an affirmative statement. As such, the exclamation points, both there and here, express the intent while maintaining the translation as literal.

The Lord is exceedingly displeased with how the priests have treated His honor. But think about it! These priests are of the people of Israel who returned from Babylon. They were told that if they failed the Lord, they would be punished and then exiled. They failed the Lord, they were punished, and they were exiled.

But the Lord returned them just as His word said. This time, there was no Israelite king to lead them. Therefore, it was up to the priests to maintain the religious order of the people, while the social order was maintained by foreigners.

What an enormous weight the priests carried to ensure the people remained properly connected to the Lord, and yet, they refused to fulfill their responsibility.

The words of a British poet, name unknown, reflect the substance of this verse in Malachi –

“Thus God’s best gifts, usurped by wicked ones,  
To poison turn by their con-ta-gi-ons.”

Next, the terrible and terrifying state of the priests continues to be called out by the Lord through Malachi...

<sup>3</sup> **“Behold, I will rebuke your descendants**

The translation is completely wrong, and it blows the emphatic finish: *hinni goer lakhem eth hazera* – “Behold Me! Rebuking to you ‘the seed.’” This is not speaking of descendants. Rather, it is speaking of the blessings which Yehovah has execrated. The Lord has purposefully rebuked the seed sown into the field.

The tithes, the Lord’s portion, were set apart every year. Once every three years, these tithes were to be doled out according to the law. A portion of these tithes, one-tenth,

was to be given to the Levites. From there, the best portion of those tithes, one-tenth, was to be given to the priests.

The Lord is saying that He will rebuke [*gaar*] “the seed,” meaning the seed which would lead to the tithes. If Israel suffered from a lack of harvest, the priests would likewise suffer. To confirm this analysis, the opposite, the blessing, will be seen in Chapter 3 where the same word is used –

“And rebuked [*gaar*] to you in the devouring,  
And no ruins to you fruit the ground,  
And no miscarries to you the vine in the field,  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.” Malachi 3:11

These are “the seed” being referred to. It is the fruit of the ground and the vine in the field. Next, He says...

<sup>3 (con't)</sup> **And spread refuse on your faces,  
The refuse of your solemn feasts;**

*v'zeriti pheresh al p'nekhem peresh khagekhem –*

“And scattered excrement upon your faces –  
Excrement your festivals.”

The meaning is found in the sacrificial offerings. The people would come before the Lord during the festivals to make sacrifices. One sacrifice was the sin offering, such as that detailed for the Festival of Tabernacles in Numbers 29.

A portion of the sin offering was to be removed and burnt upon the altar. However, the rest of it was mandated to be carried outside the camp and burned in a clean place. This explicitly included the excrement of the animal.

However, the Lord is essentially saying that instead of it being burnt in the manner of a sin offering, the excrement would be flung back at the priests, right in their faces. This is in response to the words of Chapter 1 –

“And when (surely) approach blind to sacrifice – ‘Not evil!’  
And when approach lame and rubbed – ‘Not evil!’” Malachi 1:8

In treating Him with contempt by claiming their sacrifices were not evil, He was going to bring upon them the greatest of disgraces by rejecting their sin offering and casting its dung right back at them. The ultimate point is that the sin offering is not accepted, and their sin remained unatoned for.

<sup>3</sup> (con't) **And one will take you away with it.**

The meaning of these difficult words is disputed: *v'nasa ethkhem elav* – “And lifted you unto it.” Ellicott says, “ye shall be treated like it,” meaning the priests will be treated like the dung. Cambridge equates the phrase to their names being called dung. Barnes, Keil, and others, along with many translations, say that “lifted” is to be taken in the sense of being carried away, either in exile, death, etc. Or that the dung would take the priests away with it.

None of these commentaries or translations explain the matter. Rather, this is to be equated with the thought of bearing a burden, including guilt, as is seen in Exodus and Leviticus. For example, it says of Aaron in Exodus 28:30, “And lifted, Aaron, judgment sons Israel upon his heart to faces Yehovah continually” (CG).

In other words, as the high priest and the Lord’s mediator, Aaron bore the judgment of the people before the Lord. This is true of the Azazel, the Scapegoat, of Leviticus 16. These and other examples show what is being conveyed.

The rejection of the sin offering by the Lord meant that the guilt returned to the priest, meaning, his mediation was not accepted. In turn, the guilt of the nation would remain unatoned.

<sup>4</sup> **Then you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you,**

Using the future tense completely destroys any possibility of understanding the meaning: *vidatem ki shilakhti alekhem eth hamitsvah hazoth* – “And known, for sent unto you the commandment, the this.” This isn’t speaking of something that will occur. It is speaking of the word of law that came at the establishment of the covenant – “And you have known, because I have sent unto you this commandment.”

These priests are the stewards of the law. It wasn’t something they were left in the dark about. Rather, the law is the set procedural manual for everything they were to do, down to the minutest detail. It is incredible to think that they were so willfully violating the word. It is this law, which the Lord had given in order...

<sup>4</sup> (con't) **That My covenant with Levi may continue,”**  
**Says the LORD of hosts.**

Rather: *lihyoth b'riti eth levi amar Yehovah ts'vaoth* –

“To become My covenant with Levi.’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

Of this, Ellicott says, “so that this new decree, which I have been compelled to make against the house of Levi, may be my covenant with him instead of the old one, of which the prophet goes on to speak.” Some argue “*Because my covenant was with Levi,*” while others say, “*That my covenant might remain with Levi.*”

None of the commentaries rightly explain the words because they are supposing that what is being said is happening at the time the Lord is speaking to them. Rather, the Lord gave the commandment in the past that it would become a covenant with Levi.

This is explained in Hebrews where a point is being made about the greatness of Melchizedek. However, the point explains the meaning here in Malachi –

“And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham.”

-Hebrews 7:5

Even though the law of the tithe is only a single commandment, it is a part of the law which is “the commandment” being discussed since verse 1. This commandment is a part of the Mosaic covenant. As Levi administers the covenant, it is a covenant pertaining to Levi and so...

<sup>5</sup> **“My covenant was with him, *one* of life and peace,**

The words are almost universally taken in the genitive, indicating possession, such as “of life and peace.” Rather, they are nominative where the nouns are the subject of the verb: *berithi hay'tah ito ha'khayim v'hashalom* – “My covenant became with him the life and the peace.” It is the covenant that is the life and the peace, not that it is a covenant that gives life and peace.

This is seen, for example, in the words of Moses, “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Life and peace may be a result for the people, but the state of those things belongs to the covenant itself.

<sup>5 (con't)</sup> **And I gave them to him *that he might fear Me;*  
So he feared Me**

*vaetnem lo mora vayiraeni –*

“And gave them to him – a fear.  
And feared Me.”

This is seen, for example, in the account of Phineas –

“Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal. <sup>12</sup>Therefore say, ‘Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace; <sup>13</sup>and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel.’”

-Numbers 25:11-13

The covenant set forth life and peace. In upholding the covenant, the life and the peace are realized because they are a point of fear to someone of faith. Those of faith in Levi feared because of them and acted accordingly...

<sup>5 (con't)</sup> **And was reverent before My name.**

*u-mipne sh'mi nikhath hu –* “And from faces My name terrified, he.” The word is *khathath*. It signifies to prostrate, but in the sense of collapsing from fear or being shattered by an external force. One can think of Phineas being literally dismayed at what he saw.

The honor of the Lord was being abused and what was happening in the congregation

because of it terrified him, people dying of plague before his eyes. This is the fear of the Lord that honored Him before His people. The priests had no such fear.

*Profane fire is offered to the Lord  
Wrath and indignation are the result  
First and foremost we should have checked His word  
What has happened is our fault*

*The Lord has shown us what is right and good  
What is proper is carefully laid out  
His word is not difficult. It can be understood  
In careful study, we can be sure – having no doubt*

*But it is so much easier to have our ears tickled  
Careful study is hard work. It causes the head pain  
But if we allow ourselves to stew and become pickled  
We will throw our heavenly rewards right down the drain*

*Help us Lord, to be attentive to Your word  
May we pay attention to the instruction we have heard*

## **II. You Veered From the Way (verses 6-9)**

**<sup>6</sup>The law of truth was in his mouth,  
And injustice was not found on his lips.**

The words are a form of grammar known as antithetic parallelism: *torath emeth hay'tah b'phihu v'avlah lo nimtsa bisphathav –*

“Law truth became in his mouth,  
And iniquity not found in his lips.”

The positive is stated first, followed by the negative. The words “law truth” are a general statement concerning the law. In other words, the law is *emeth*, truth, because it is the word of God.

At a previous time, Levi was right with the Lord and his doctrine of the law was rightly established. Hence, the words “in his mouth.” The place where words are fashioned was rightly forming the law as provided by the Lord.

That leads directly to the law proceeding from his lips, the continued means of conveying speech. In teaching the law, it was given to the people. As it is a law of truth, and because Levi rightly spoke it, there was no *avlah*, iniquity, being conveyed to the people. Thus...

<sup>6</sup> (con't) **He walked with Me in peace and equity,  
And turned many away from iniquity.**

The contrasting structure continues: *b'shalom uvmishor halakh iti v'rabim heshiv meavon* –

“In peace and in level, walked with Me,  
And many turned from perversity.”

Levi's walk with the Lord was in harmony with the walk of the Lord (in peace), and it was unwavering as he walked (in level). Because of this, he was able to be an example to those who were following a wayward path, turning them from it to the proper path.

The *avon*, perversity, is contrary to the way of the Lord. He is holy. Those contrary to Him are morally evil and thus unholy. One can think of any sound preacher who is willing to properly teach people what is right, call out what is wrong, and explain to others why they need to turn from their evil and do what is right.

This is what Levi was doing at one point. This was no longer the case with the priests of Malachi's time. But this was not how it should be...

<sup>7</sup> **“For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge,  
And *people* should seek the law from his mouth;**

The words form standard parallelism with the words, lips, and mouth now reversed from the previous verse: *ki siphthe khohen yishm'ru daath v'thorah y'vaqshu mipihu* –

“For lips priest guard knowledge,  
And law seek from his mouth.”

The verbs are third person plural, “their knowledge” and “they seek.” In this case, one can think of the lips as the locking door on a repository. They guard the right knowledge that is inside, not letting anything foreign enter, and they only allow what is proper to

pass out. The words of this clause fit exactly with the words of our text verse, Titus 1:9.

That is set in parallel to the external seeking of the law of truth (as stated above) by the people which was to proceed from the priest's mouth. This is how it was to be. If he failed, the people would be led astray, but he was not to fail. This is because...

<sup>7</sup> (con't) **For he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.**

The words are emphatic: *ki malakh Y'hovah ts'vaoth hu* – “For messenger Yehovah Sabaoth – he.” The word is *malakh*, a messenger. It is the same word used in reference to the coming of both John the Baptist and then Jesus in Malachi 3:1.

The Levite was designated as the messenger of the Lord under the Old Covenant. There were, at times, angelic messengers who came directly from the Lord, but as the standard for daily life, the Levites represented the Lord to His people. If they mishandled the Lord's word, they were being unfaithful messengers.

The word comes from an unused root signifying to dispatch as deputy. The deputy is charged to do a job for which he has been deputized, not going out on his own, but representing the will and intent of the one who sent him. As the Lord set up the Levitical priesthood and the other Levites who ministered to and for them, they were to only do the will and intent of the Lord...

<sup>8</sup> **But you have departed from the way;**

*v'atem sartem min ha'derekh* – “And you veered from the way.” There is the right way, and there is departing from that way. The priests veered off the path, meaning they were no longer on it. With the nature of God, concerning the law, there are no shades of gray. The priests, out of all of Israel, were supposed to know this.

In veering from the way, the consequences are next stated...

<sup>8</sup> (con't) **You have caused many to stumble at the law.**

Rather: *hikhshaltem rabim batorah* – “Wavered many in the law.” Saying “at” does a disservice to the point of the law. What Paul says about the law in the New Testament is true. It is good and holy. It is not something that causes people to stumble all by itself. If that was true, then it ostensibly could have caused Jesus to stumble.

Rather, the poor or false teaching of the law by the priests caused the people to stumble in the law that they were still accountable to, even if they didn't know it. Along with this...

**8 (con't) You have corrupted the covenant of Levi,"  
Says the LORD of hosts.**

Rather: *shikhatem berith ha'levi amar Y'hovah ts'vaoth* –

“Ruined covenant the Levite,’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

First, it is not the covenant of Levi. It is “covenant, the Levite.” Also, the *v'atem*, and you, of the first clause covers this clause as well. It is like bullet points being shot out to the priests in succession. In veering from the way, they have ruined “covenant, the Levite.” The article before Levite takes us right back to verse 4 –

“And known, for sent unto you the commandment, the this.  
To become My covenant with Levi.”

The terminology is explained in Hebrews 7 –

“Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?” Hebrews 7:11

The covenant, the Levite is represented by the Levitical priesthood. In ruining “covenant, the Levite,” they have ruined the covenant that is administered by the Levite. This occurred because the priests were fallen men, incapable of maintaining such a covenant. That is why Hebrews continues with –

“For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. <sup>13</sup> For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.

<sup>14</sup> For *it is* evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. <sup>15</sup> And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest <sup>16</sup> who has come, not according to the

law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. <sup>17</sup> For He testifies:

'You *are* a priest forever

According to the order of Melchizedek.'

<sup>18</sup> For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, <sup>19</sup> for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God." Hebrews 7:12-19

<sup>9</sup> **"Therefore I also have made you contemptible and base  
Before all the people,**

The words are emphatic: *v'gam ani nathati ethkhem nivzim ushphalim l'khal ha'am* – "And also, I, I made you disesteemed and abased to all the people." The words take us back to the priests' attitude of verse 1:6 –

"Son honors father,  
And servant his master.

And if Father, I –  
Where My honor?

And if Lords, I –  
Where My fear?'

Said Yehovah Sabaoth to you, the priests, disesteeming My name."

The priests treated the table of the Lord with disesteem. They continued to disesteem His name through all of their other actions, building upon the thought of verse 1:6. Therefore, the Lord now repays them in kind.

Saying "before all the people," certainly means that as the people fall from the law, they will fall from the provisions of the law, which included tithes and offerings. The priests would thus lose out on those things and have to fend for themselves.

Without their own inheritance of land to sustain themselves, they would be more disesteemed and debased than all others. And all of this has come about...

<sup>9 (fin)</sup> **Because you have not kept My ways  
But have shown partiality in the law."**

It is another contrasting parallel to finish our verses today: *k'phi asher enkhem shomrim eth drakay v'nosim panim batorah* –

“According to mouth which not you guarding with My ways.  
And lifting faces in the law.”

The words back up to verse 7 –

“For lips priest guard knowledge,  
And law seek from His mouth.”

The ways of the Lord were to be guarded. That was the job of the priest. Instead of this, they showed favoritism. The law is, by nature, unbiased. Further, it was to be administered as such, as our closing verse will show.

In doing what they were doing, they were disgracing the name of the Lord and violating the covenant they were designated to administer. From that steppingstone, the name of the Lord would be held in contempt by the people.

The same truth stands today in every church in the world. Where the people of God meet, the ministers of His New Covenant will either exalt the Lord through right application and instruction of His word, bringing honor to His name, or they will fail to uphold His word and bring dishonor to it.

Adam Clarke provides a well-reasoned thought for us:

See the qualifications of Levi:

1. “He feared me;” he was my sincere worshipper.
2. “He was afraid;” he acted as in the presence of a just and holy God, and acted conscientiously in all that he did.
3. “My law of truth was ever in his mouth;” by this he directed his own conduct and that of others.
4. “No iniquity;” nothing contrary to justice and equity ever proceeded “from his lips.”
5. “He walked with me in peace;” he lived in such a way as to keep up union with me.
6. “He did turn many away from iniquity;” by his upright administration, faithful exhortations, and pious walk, he became the instrument of converting many sinners.

This character suits every genuine minister of God. And as the priest's lips should preserve knowledge, so the people should seek "the law at his mouth;" for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts, Malachi 2:7.

The entire passage today takes us right back to Genesis 3. There was fellowship between God and man. Man turned from God, and that fellowship was broken. Mediation between God and man was fractured. Someone in the family may have mediated, or it may have been conducted by someone such as Melchizedek.

But the mediation was imperfect, except in type. From there, the law was introduced, but the imperfection of it is found not in the law itself but in the men who mediated it. As the knowledge of sin comes through law, and as a Redeemer (even if that descriptor was not used) was promised to restore all things (Genesis 3:15), then we can see that this Redeemer would first have to deal with the problem of law.

This is what Jesus came to do, and it is what He accomplished. John tells us of the giving law through Moses and the giving of grace through Jesus. His dealing with the law of Moses, by being born under that law and fulfilling it for us, is what allows the grace.

The Lord, through Malachi, is showing us this. He is taking us back to the Garden of Eden to learn the lesson so that He can, in reality, take us back to the Garden of Eden – meaning whatever He gives us in place of what we have lost. Thank God for Jesus who has made this possible, and may the Lord speed the day of its coming.

**Closing Verse:** *"You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for the judgment is God's. The case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it." <sup>18</sup> And I commanded you at that time all the things which you should do." Deuteronomy 1:17, 18*

**Next Week:** Malachi 2:10-17 *The treacherous man, acting like a real Varmint...* (Violence Upon His Garment) (5<sup>th</sup> Malachi Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He has sent His Messenger to carry the good news to all people. Jesus! God promised, and God delivered. The time of the law has ended, and grace has come. Praise God for Jesus.

## Malachi 2:1-9 (CG)

“And now, unto you, the commandment, the this, the priests:

<sup>2</sup> If not hear! And if not set upon heart!

To give honor to My name,’

Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

“And sent in you the execration.

(And execrated your blessings.)

And also execrated it.

For naught you setting upon heart!

<sup>3</sup> Behold Me! Rebuking to you “the seed,”

And scattered excrement upon your faces –

Excrement your festivals.

And lifted you unto it!

<sup>4</sup> And known, for sent unto you the commandment, the this.

To become My covenant with Levi.’

Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

<sup>5</sup> “My covenant became with him the life and the peace,

And gave them to him – a fear.

And feared Me,

And from faces My name prostrated, he.

<sup>6</sup> Law truth became in his mouth,

And iniquity not found in his lips.

In peace and in level, walked with Me,

And many turned from perversity.

<sup>7</sup> For lips priest guard knowledge,

And law seek from his mouth.

For messenger Yehovah Sabaoth – he.

<sup>8</sup> And you veered from the way,

Wavered many in the law,

Ruined covenant the Levite,’

Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

<sup>9</sup> “And also, I, I made you disesteemed and abased,

To all the people,

According to mouth which not you guarding with My ways.

And lifting faces in the law.

## Malachi 2:1-9 (NKJV)

“And now, O priests, this commandment is for you.

<sup>2</sup> If you will not hear,  
And if you will not take *it* to heart,  
To give glory to My name,”

Says the Lord of hosts,  
“I will send a curse upon you,  
And I will curse your blessings.

Yes, I have cursed them already,  
Because you do not take *it* to heart.

<sup>3</sup> “Behold, I will rebuke your descendants  
And spread refuse on your faces,  
The refuse of your solemn feasts;  
And *one* will take you away with it.

<sup>4</sup> Then you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you,  
That My covenant with Levi may continue,”  
Says the Lord of hosts.

<sup>5</sup> “My covenant was with him, *one* of life and peace,  
And I gave them to him *that he might fear Me*;  
So he feared Me

And was reverent before My name.

<sup>6</sup> The law of truth was in his mouth,  
And injustice was not found on his lips.  
He walked with Me in peace and equity,  
And turned many away from iniquity.

<sup>7</sup> “For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge,  
And *people* should seek the law from his mouth;  
For he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.

<sup>8</sup> But you have departed from the way;  
You have caused many to stumble at the law.  
You have corrupted the covenant of Levi,”  
Says the Lord of hosts.

<sup>9</sup> “Therefore I also have made you contemptible and base  
Before all the people,  
Because you have not kept My ways  
But have shown partiality in the law.”

## **MALACHI 2:10-17** **(VIOLENCE UPON HIS GARMENT)**

Translating can be a difficult thing, even in creating a literal translation. There is just so much involved in the process, in linguistic nuances that need to be considered, in the surrounding context of what is being presented, and so forth.

A mistranslation, or a misunderstanding in the context, can result in an entirely different meaning for the reader who is trying to appreciate God's word. Malachi is filled with difficult words and phrases that require a vast knowledge of the rest of Scripture to pin down intent.

As an example, the opening clause of verse 15 is comprised of three simple words in the Hebrew text: *v'lo ekhad asah* – "And not, one, made?" As easy as the words appear, almost all of the translations I check render them a bit differently. Some of them are vastly different –

Has not the one God made you? / Didn't the LORD make you one with your wife? / Did he not make them one, / Has not the LORD made them one, / But not one has done so / Didn't God make them one / Didn't the one God make us / Didn't God create you and your wife to become like one person? / Didn't God make you one body / Didn't [God] make you one? / No one ... does this. / And did not he make one? / But did He not make *them* one, / And did not he make them one? / Did he not make one, / Did he not make you one, / And did He not make *you* one? / And did not one make [them]? / So did not the one, / And He did not make one [only], / And He did not make one only, / And did he not make one? / Did not one make her, / Was there not one man / And not one hath done so / And did he not do well?

There are other variations, but I got sleepy and stopped. It's a real problem. What causes three simple Hebrew words to be so complicated in meaning or intent?

**Text Verse:** *"You who judged your sisters, bear your own shame also, because the sins which you committed were more abominable than theirs; they are more righteous than you. Yes, be disgraced also, and bear your own shame, because you justified your sisters." Ezekiel 16:52*

As I was going through the verses, I couldn't help but think of the utterly depraved, far-left Jews who are in Congress. People like Chuck Schumer and Jerry Nadler, among numerous others, appear to be demon-possessed.

But it could be the same syndrome seen in the people of Israel at the time of Malachi... well, at pretty much any time. They have no fear of God because they think God loves them simply because of who they are.

One of my Jewish friends from high school assured me that all Jews go straight to heaven, well, except maybe murderers and stuff. This type of thinking makes it easy to feel it's ok to do whatever you want as there will be no consequences for your actions.

This is known as a presupposition. People believe the world around them works by what they already suppose to be true. This is why there are so many variations in the translation of the three Hebrew words we looked at a minute ago.

Having presuppositions may be one of the most damaging things of all in regard to theology, our relationship with God, job promotions, how smart someone is, or an unlimited number of other things. Unless you are certain about something important, it is better to check it out rather than go with your suppositions.

This is especially so when dealing with the God of the Bible. We will all stand before Him someday. We should know, not suppose, what will occur on that day.

Such truths as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. The Daughter of a Foreign God (verses 10-12)**

The words take a new direction. Verses 10-15 are words of the prophet rebuking Israel. In verse 16, he will cite the Lord again, and then he will continue speaking to the people.

#### **<sup>10</sup> Have we not all one Father?**

*halo av ekhad l'khulanu* – “Not Father one to us all?” As always with a sentence like this, there is debate about who the “one Father” is. Is it Adam, the father of humanity? Is it Abraham, the father of the faith, or Jacob, the father of the nation, etc.? The debate

fails to understand the parallelism found in the verse itself as well as the reference established earlier.

The Father is God, the subject of the next parallel clause. It is also He who was referred to in Chapter 1 –

“A son honors *his* father,  
And a servant *his* master.  
If then I am the Father,  
Where *is* My honor?  
And if I *am* a Master,  
Where *is* My reverence?  
Says the Lord of hosts.” Malachi 1:6

The words follow suit with what has already been set forth in the law. In the Song of Moses, the matter was established –

“Do you thus deal with the Lord,  
O foolish and unwise people?  
*Is* He not your Father, *who* bought you?  
Has He not made you and established you?” Deuteronomy 32:6

Understanding this, the prophet continues with parallelism...

<sup>10</sup> (con't) **Has not one God created us?**

*halo el ekhad b'raanu* – “Not God one created us?” It is speaking of the Lord, the God of Israel, as it looks back to the word of the Lord through Isaiah –

“But now, thus says the Lord, who created [*bara'*] you, O Jacob,  
And He who formed you, O Israel:  
“Fear not, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called *you* by your name;  
You *are* Mine.” Isaiah 43:1

As such, the words here are not speaking of the general fatherhood of God in relation to man, but the specific fatherhood of the Lord in relation to Israel. Because of this, Malachi asks...

<sup>10</sup> (con't) **Why do we deal treacherously with one another  
By profaning the covenant of the fathers?**

Rather: *madua nivgad ish b'akhiv l'khalel berith avotenu* –

“Why deal covertly man in his brother,  
To profane covenant our fathers?”

Profaning the covenant is the result of the act (to) rather than the profaning leading to the act (by). The act is found in the first of these two clauses. That is what brought about the profaning of the covenant.

The word *bagad* is used. It is derived from a primitive root signifying to cover with a garment. Thus, figuratively, it means to act covertly. From there, the idea of dealing treacherously is the meaning.

A person who wants to bring harm to another will cover himself in order to work out his evil unrecognized. Though not a common word, it will be used five times in this chapter. In this case, the meaning is that in dealing wrongly with one's brother, he is profaning the covenant.

As noted, the Lord is Israel's Father, and Israel was created by the Lord to be His people. Therefore, it is an abomination that one Israelite member of the covenant would deal covertly against his brother.

And yet, it was a common occurrence, indicated by the use of the plural verb which gives the sense of “Why are we dealing covertly, one man against his brother?” This same thought is seen in 1 Thessalonians as well –

“that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.” 1 Thessalonians 4:6

Next, the Lord focuses on the collective nation dealing covertly against Him. The words explain how those of the previous verse dealt covertly against their neighbors in profaning the covenant...

<sup>11</sup> **Judah has dealt treacherously,  
And an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem,**

*bagdah y'hudah v'thovah neesthah b'yisrael u-virushalim –*

“Dealt covertly, Judah,  
And abhorrence done in Israel and in Jerusalem.”

The lines are again set in parallel. Judah is equated to Israel and Jerusalem. Again, the word *bagad* is used, but it is in the feminine form. Judah refers to the people of Israel at this point in time, just as the all-encompassing term Jew does today. But it is as if the land itself is being described in the acts of its inhabitants.

Israel is the nation and Jerusalem is its capital. The “dealt covertly” is set in parallel to the “abhorrence done in.” Thus, the wickedness being committed in Israel and in Jerusalem is spoken of as the land dealing treacherously against the Lord.

As a side note, one can see the absolute unity of the land in relation to the people. This is why when they are exiled from the land, they are not God’s people, as noted by Moses in Deuteronomy 32 –

“They have corrupted themselves;  
*They are* not His children,  
Because of their blemish:  
A perverse and crooked generation.” Deuteronomy 32:5

This is explained more fully by Paul and Peter in the New Testament. There is a point where the sonship is ended. At that time, exile is to be expected. Malachi is warning against that happening again, just as it did when Babylon carried them away. To show how they are doing this, he continues...

**11 (con't) For Judah has profaned  
The LORD’s holy *institution* which He loves:  
He has married the daughter of a foreign god.**

*ki hilel y'hudah qodesh Y'hovah asher ahev uvaal bath el nakhar –*

“For profaned, Judah, holy Yehovah – which loved,  
And married daughter god foreign.”

The idea is that Judah, spoken of collectively as a single entity, has profaned the people and their worship of the Lord (the holy Yehovah) which is considered a marriage contract with Him.

Judah has done this through marriage to the daughter of a foreign god. In other words, it is through the people's intermarriages with those who do not worship the Lord but instead worship other gods. This is how they are dealing covertly "man in his brother" in verse 10. It is what Solomon was faulted for –

"But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, *and* Hittites— <sup>2</sup>from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.' ... <sup>6</sup>Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as *did* his father David. <sup>7</sup>Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that *is* east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. <sup>8</sup>And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. <sup>9</sup>So the Lord became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, <sup>10</sup>and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord had commanded." 1 Kings 11:1-5 & 6-10

This is what Ezra and Nehemiah spoke against. For example –

"Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin. <sup>27</sup>Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?" Nehemiah 13:26, 27

In this, they were dealing covertly against their brothers in the covenant and against the Lord with whom the covenant was made. Malachi, a prophet somewhat contemporary with these men, is rebuking the nation for their actions in this regard. Thus...

**<sup>12</sup> May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob  
The man who does this, being awake and aware,  
Yet who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts!**

The words contain a jussive: *yakhreth Y'hovah la'ish asher yaasenah er v'oneh meahole yaaqov u-magish minkhah la'Y'hovah ts'vaoth* –

“May cut off, Yehovah!

(To the man who does it – awakening and heeding)

From tents Jacob,

And approaches offering to Yehovah Sabaoth.”

The words “May cut off” are connected to the words “From tents Jacob,” making the intervening words parenthetical. The prophet is calling for the Lord to personally cut off a person who does these things.

The expression “awakening and heeding” is thought to be proverbial. It is only found here, and it is debated exactly what it means. But the intent is still discernible. An Israelite who is purposefully defiling the covenant in this way, and yet then comes to the altar of the Lord to make an offering, is intentionally putting his actions in the face of the Lord.

This is essentially what happened in the account of Numbers 25 –

“And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who *were* weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. <sup>7</sup> Now when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw *it*, he rose from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand; <sup>8</sup> and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel. <sup>9</sup> And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand.” Numbers 25:6-9

Right in the sight of the tabernacle, he brought this pagan woman into the congregation as if his actions were acceptable.

Although the parallel may be hard to see, it is what originally occurred in Eden. Adam was given a command from the Lord. However, the serpent came forward telling his wife that what Adam was told was incorrect. Who would Adam listen to?

He turned from the Lord to what was essentially the daughter of a foreign god, one whose allegiance had been decided through her actions. It shows the repetitive pattern of abuse by man towards his necessary obedience and devotion to the Lord.

Next, Malachi turns to another issue that was displeasing to the Lord...

*You spend your youth with her  
But now you are looking for another  
Look at the wrinkles she did incur  
While tending to you. You're cold-hearted, brother*

*The years have taken their toll on her  
And it's no different for you  
Finding someone new isn't the cure  
Think about the thing you intend to do*

*Your children will see and hearts will be hardened  
The line will start to turn another way  
Eventually, none of them will ever be pardoned  
Because of the actions you're taking today*

## **II. Watch in Your Spirit (verses 13-17)**

**<sup>13</sup> And this is the second thing you do:**

*v'zoth shenith taasu* – “And this second do.” The words can mean either a second in a series or a second time, as if they are doing what they used to do. It seems likely that this is the second offense after the one just named – “You are also doing this wrong...”

**<sup>13</sup> (con't) You cover the altar of the LORD with tears,  
With weeping and crying;**

The word “You” is not in the text: *kasoth dimah eth mizbakh Y'hovah b'khi vaanaqah* – “Covering tears altar Yehovah – a weeping and a shrieking.” Because the word you is not there, and because the previous charge (verse 11) stated the reprehensible nature of the sin before the sin itself is named, many take this in the same light.

As such, they say that the covering of the altar in a weeping and a shrieking is the result of their actions, and therefore, it is referring to the weeping and shrieking of the

divorced wives. It is possible, but it seems that the weeping and shrieking are from those committing the transgression when they get to the altar.

The reason for their consternation is next stated. There will be an assertion by the prophet, then an objection, and finally a rebuttal...

**13 (con't) So He does not regard the offering anymore,  
Nor receive *it* with goodwill from your hands.**

*meen od p'noth el haminkhah v'laqakhath ratson miyedkhem –*

“From naught again turning unto the present,  
And to taking a delight from your hands.”

The people came forward with offerings (the present) to the Lord, but the prophet asserted that the Lord would not turn to accept it as an acceptable offering from their hands. Again, it is what happened in an early Genesis account –

“And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup> but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.” Genesis 4:4, 5

The Lord had no respect for Cain's offering because Cain's offering lacked the faith of Abel's. These people, demonstrating a lack of faith in the Lord through their actions, find that the Lord will not accept their offerings. He is treating them like Cain and they feel slighted...

**14 Yet you say, “For what reason?”**

The people object to the assertion: *v'amartem al mah* – “And said, ‘Upon what?’” The idea is, “Upon what is the Lord basing His rejection of our offerings?” This would be in conjunction with their covering the altar with their tears. “You are treating us like Cain? What have we done to deserve this treatment?” With that stated, the Lord, through the prophet, makes His rebuttal.

**14 (con't) Because the LORD has been witness  
Between you and the wife of your youth,  
With whom you have dealt treacherously;**

The words contain the third use of *bagad*, to deal covertly, in the passage: *al ki Y'hovah heid ben'kha u-ven esheth n'urekha asher atah bagadta* –

“That Yehovah repeated between you and between wife your youths,  
Whom you dealt covertly in her.”

Some scholars say that the word witness is being used as a standing witness between the two parties in the rite of marriage. That does not fit the context. The Lord has rejected their offerings. Thus, He has gone from a standing witness to an avenging witness. A standing witness would be the noun *ed*.

Rather, it is the verb *ud*, to repeat or duplicate. It is a way of showing stress. One might say, “I told you once, now I am telling you again.” It would then mean, “I warned you.” In this case, the Lord is repeating, making a judgment, between each individual and his wife.

As for the word *naur*, youths, it is like water or blood in that it is a plural word. Thus, the idea is “the years of your youth.” At some point, he tired of her. Maybe it was the wrinkles. Instead of treating her as a wife worthy of respect because of the time he spent with her during his good years, which were also her good years, he was willing to forsake her due to her advancing age.

She would be left destitute. It was unlikely she would be wanted by other men, thus consigning her to a lonely, poor, and tragic existence...

<sup>14</sup> (con't) **Yet she is your companion  
And your wife by covenant.**

*bah v'hi havertkha v'esheth b'rithekha* – “And she, your consort and wife, your covenant.” Here is a word found only once in Scripture, *khavereth*. It is the feminine of *khaver*, a friend or companion. Thus, it is a consort or companion.

The prophet has built upon history to form this conclusion. Adam was given a wife by the Lord with a special note concerning the union, that they would become one. The example of Israel as the bride of the Lord showed that the Lord considered their union a binding covenant.

Only when the northern tribes were wholly unfaithful to Him did He write her a bill of divorce (Jeremiah 3:8). Judah is said to have acted worse than Israel, and yet He still kept them as His bride.

Also, while talking about an adulterous wife, Proverbs 2:17 notes that in her actions, she has forsaken the companion of her youth and the covenant of her God.

These examples tell us that the actions of the people in divorcing their wives in a random and undeserved manner were what brought about the Lord's rejection of their offerings at the altar. To further bolster the rebuttal, he next says...

**<sup>15</sup> But did He not make *them* one,**

Of verse 15, John Lange says, "We come now to the most difficult verse of all others in the prophecy."

*v'lo ekhad asah* – "And not, one, made?" It would be hard to find anything other than the creation story to explain these words. God formed Adam and breathed life into him. From Adam, He took a rib and formed the woman as seen in Genesis 2:24 –

"Upon thus leaves man his father and mother and clinged in his wife, and became flesh one [*ekhad*]" (CG).

Unfortunately, these three words have been so widely translated that, of course, there is disagreement. Each is based on presuppositions that form how we view things. As the narrative speaks of dealing covertly with one's wife through divorce (as will be seen), it would logically follow that it is referring to the union that formed the marriage in the first place.

Malachi has repeatedly taken his audience back to Genesis. The Lord is bridging the span of time to convey truths that had been forgotten or rejected. The manner in which God formed the man, and the woman made them one.

In Genesis 2:24, it didn't say that Adam became one flesh with his wife. That was already understood. Rather, it said that a man and a woman who marry become one flesh. Leaving a father and a mother, which every person since Adam has had, implies all males who marry women. Adam merely set the pattern which is then followed as noted in the words "Upon thus." That is the result of marriage. Next, it says...

### 15 (con't) **Having a remnant of the Spirit?**

*ush'ar ruakh lo* – “And remainder Spirit to him?” The “to him” refers to Adam, but it is inclusive of Eve based on the principle of being one flesh. The last part of the creation narrative of Genesis 1 was that of the creation of man –

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ <sup>27</sup> So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created [*bara*] them. <sup>28</sup> Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” Genesis 1:26-28

In Genesis 2, which fills in the details of Genesis 1, it explains that only one woman was made for the man. That is the remainder of the Spirit. In other words, God could have created lots of wives for Adam. He also could have created lots of people and lots of wives for them all. But God created one man and finished up His creative efforts with one woman.

The words of Genesis 2:24 state that the two became one. The pattern is set and all who follow after that are one in God’s eyes. It speaks of the union. We know this because Paul cites the Genesis account when referring to a person uniting with a harlot. They are one. From there, the next words confirm what has been stated...

### 15 (con't) **And why one?**

*umah ha'ekhad* – “And why the one?” It would be illogical to suppose the word *ekhad* referred to anything other than the *ekhad* of the first clause. With the article, the one (*ha'ekhad*), it is speaking of a particular one, the reference of which should be perfectly understood.

The union of the man and his wife is the one based on the original pattern set forth in the creation story. And why was there the one?

### 15 (con't) **He seeks godly offspring.**

*m'baqesh zera elohim* – “Seeking seed God.” God knew exactly what would happen if He created lots of women for Adam or if he created lots of people at the start. It would not have worked out. But by setting the pattern at the beginning, it was intended to reveal the proper workings of a family.

There is a head of a house. He is united as one to the female in the house. The children are under the headship of the father first and then the mother. When this gets out of balance, the inevitable result will be a chaotic existence.

Eve began this chaotic state by usurping the order in her proclamation “acquired man, Yehovah” (Genesis 4:1). She had relations with Adam but claimed that Cain was her acquisition from Yehovah.

Chaos ensued and an entire line of ungodly offspring resulted, highlighted only 2 chapters later when the sons of the God went into the daughters of men –

“Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, <sup>2</sup> that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they *were* beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.” Genesis 6:1, 2

The “seed God,” the godly offspring that existed, did exactly what Israel was repeating at the time of Malachi. The result: chaos. The Lord is ensuring that humanity can be saved. How will that come about if there is nothing left of humanity to save?

Israel was called to be a holy people and to retain a right knowledge of the true God until the coming of Christ to redeem man from sin. Through their actions, they were failing in this calling.

<sup>15</sup> (con't) **Therefore take heed to your spirit,  
And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.**

*v'nishmartem b'rukhakhem uvesheth n'urekha al yivgod* –

“And watch in your spirit,  
And in wife his youths not dealt covertly.”

Again, the verses are set in parallel, but the first refers back to Spirit of the second clause. The remnant of the Spirit that created Eve for Adam as the final act of the

creation narrative continues in the union between men and women since. Watching in their spirits means monitoring the union that was established before God.

The parallel words instruct how that is accomplished, which is by dealing properly, not covertly through divorce, with their wives...

**<sup>16</sup>“For the LORD God of Israel says  
That He hates divorce,  
For it covers one’s garment with violence,”  
Says the LORD of hosts.**

*ki sane shalakh amar Y’hovah elohe Yisrael v’khisah khamas al l’vusho amar Y’hovah ts’vaoth –*

“‘For hate ‘sending away’  
Said Yehovah God Israel.  
‘And covered – violence upon his garment,’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

The clauses need to be taken together because they are set in parallel. To “send away” means divorce as in Deuteronomy 24:1 –

“When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house...”

Some translations actually use Deuteronomy 24 as the basis for their translation here, such as, “When thou shalt hate her put her away, saith the Lord the God of Israel.”  
Douay-Rheims

That is completely against the tenor of the passage and it destroys the parallelism. Despite having given the allowance in the law for divorce, Yehovah hates the attitude and what results from it. Thus, to do what they were doing was as if they were covered in violence.

The word *al*, upon, is used after the subject (violence) and preceding the object (garment) being covered.

16 (con't) **“Therefore take heed to your spirit,  
That you do not deal treacherously.”**

*v'nishmartem b'rukhakhem v'lo tivgodu –*

“And watch in your spirit,  
And no deal covertly.”

As with verse 15, the words are set in parallel. They convey the same thought but are shortened. Dealing covertly with the wife of one's youths has been explained. The brevity here thus becomes a point of emphasis.

This is the fifth and last use of the word *bagad*, deal covertly, in Malachi. The Lord wants the people to deal openly and fairly with Him, between one another, and with their wives. Anything less is unacceptable. So much so that another assertion comes forth...

**17 You have wearied the LORD with your words;**

*hogatem Y'hovah b'divrekhem –* “Gasped, Yehovah in your words.” The word “words,” is not to be taken literally. Quite often in Scripture, a word refers to one's actions. That is what is being conveyed here. It is as if Yehovah is utterly shocked at their conduct. He gasps at what He sees, equating what they are doing to their words because it is as if they are openly proclaiming with their mouths what they are doing.

17 (con't) **Yet you say,  
“In what way have we wearied Him?”**

The objection is: *vaamartem bamah hoga'nu –* “And said, “In what gasped?” Their response is like a little child that has chocolate all over his face and hands and yet says, “What? I haven't done anything wrong!” So, Malachi has to explain it to them in his rebuttal...

17 (con't) **In that you say,  
“Everyone who does evil  
Is good in the sight of the LORD,  
And He delights in them,”**

*b'emar'khem kal oseh ra tov b'ene Y'hovah uvahem hu khaphets –*

“In your saying, ‘All doing evil good in eye Yehovah.’  
‘And in them, He inclined.’”

It is again a pair of parallel clauses. The Israelite’s actions, which are evil, shout out that they think they are good in the eyes of Yehovah simply because of who they are despite the wickedness they do. In fact, they are so good, even when they do evil, that the Lord inclines, *khaphets*, toward them.

It is the Schumer, Nadler, et al, attitude of people who are so lost in their supposed righteousness before God because of their culture and heritage that God simply adores them.

Being a perfect verb, inclined, He leaned in and He will never be uninclined from them. And then we come to a corresponding thought based on that...

<sup>17 (fin)</sup> **Or, “Where is the God of justice?”**

*o ayeh elohe ha’mishpat* – “Or, ‘Where God the verdict?’” The *mishpat* is a verdict or judgment, coming from *shaphat*, to judge or govern. Many scholars take these words as, “If the Gentiles are all getting away with wickedness, where is God who judges them?” That is completely the opposite of what is being conveyed.

It is their ways that are being evaluated. They have been told in their law that when they don’t heed, God will respond. After returning from exile, the people must have thought, “God really loves us. Here we are back in our land again.” And then, off they went returning to lives of wickedness.

Nothing has changed in the world today in regard to the Jewish people, who are a microcosm or snapshot of the general tenor and nature of all people. As for their conduct being highlighted and called out by Malachi, Adam Clarke has appropriate words to close out the passage –

“All these things show that this people were horribly corrupt. The priests were bad; the prophets were bad; the Levites were bad; and no wonder that the people were irreligious, profane, profligate, and cruel.”

As I stated earlier, the attitude among many Jews is that they stand righteous before God because of who they are. This is not limited to them, but it sure is highlighted in them.

The Bible and what it says about sin is like a high-intensity light shining at them and what they do.

When we read the word, it should convict us by highlighting the sin in our lives and getting us to turn from it. Unfortunately, that is not how it is for most of Israel at this time. Paul explains that when they read the Old Testament, a veil remains.

Only in Christ is that veil lifted. When we compare ourselves to Him, everything about who we are comes into clarity of focus. Our state before God is not a happy one without Jesus. And so, let us use God's standard, check ourselves out, and then make the right call by coming to Him through Jesus.

It is His perfection that God grants to us. Let us not stand before Him without it.

**Closing Verse:** *"They said, 'Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her. <sup>5</sup>And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. <sup>6</sup>But from the beginning of the creation, God "made them male and female." <sup>7</sup>"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, <sup>8</sup>and the two shall become one flesh"; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. <sup>9</sup>Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."*

-Mark 10:4-9

**Next Week:** Malachi 3:1-4 *Way better than Nixon sending Kissinger...* (Behold Me – Sending My Messenger) (6<sup>th</sup> Malachi Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He has sent His Messenger to carry the good news to all people. Jesus! God promised, and God delivered. The time of the law has ended, and grace has come. Praise God for Jesus.

### **Malachi 2:10-17 (CG)**

<sup>10</sup> Not Father one to us all?

Not God one created us??

Why deals covertly man in his brother,

To profane covenant our fathers?

<sup>11</sup> Dealt covertly, Judah,

And abhorrence done in Israel and in Jerusalem.

For profaned, Judah, holy Yehovah – which loved,

And married daughter god foreign.

<sup>12</sup> May cut off, Yehovah!

(To the man who does it – awakening and heeding)

From tents Jacob,

And approaches offering to Yehovah Sabaoth.

<sup>13</sup> And this second do:

Covering tears altar Yehovah – a weeping and a shrieking,

From naught again turning unto the present,

And to taking a delight from your hands.

<sup>14</sup> And said, “Upon what?”

That Yehovah repeated between you and between wife your youths,

Whom you dealt covertly in her,

And she, your consort and wife, your covenant.

<sup>15</sup> And not, one, made?

And remainder Spirit to him?

And why the one?

Seeking seed God.

And watch in your spirit

And in wife his youths not dealt covertly.

<sup>16</sup> “For hate ‘sending away’

Said Yehovah God Israel.”

“‘And covered – violence upon his garment,’

Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

And watch in your spirit,

And no deal covertly.

<sup>17</sup> Gaspeth, Yehovah in your words

And said, “In what gasped?”

In your saying, “All doing evil good in eye Yehovah.

And in them, He inclined.”

Or, “Where God the verdict?”

### **Malachi 2:10-17 (NKJV)**

Have we not all one Father?

Has not one God created us?

Why do we deal treacherously with one another

By profaning the covenant of the fathers?

<sup>11</sup> Judah has dealt treacherously,

And an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem,

For Judah has profaned  
The Lord's holy *institution* which He loves:  
He has married the daughter of a foreign god.  
<sup>12</sup> May the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob  
The man who does this, being [d]awake and aware,  
Yet who brings an offering to the Lord of hosts!  
<sup>13</sup> And this is the second thing you do:  
You cover the altar of the Lord with tears,  
With weeping and crying;  
So He does not regard the offering anymore,  
Nor receive *it* with goodwill from your hands.  
<sup>14</sup> Yet you say, "For what reason?"  
Because the Lord has been witness  
Between you and the wife of your youth,  
With whom you have dealt treacherously;  
Yet she is your companion  
And your wife by covenant.  
<sup>15</sup> But did He not make *them* one,  
Having a remnant of the Spirit?  
And why one?  
He seeks godly offspring.  
Therefore take heed to your spirit,  
And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.  
<sup>16</sup> "For the Lord God of Israel says  
That He hates divorce,  
For it covers one's garment with violence,"  
Says the Lord of hosts.  
"Therefore take heed to your spirit,  
That you do not deal treacherously."  
<sup>17</sup> You have wearied the Lord with your words;  
Yet you say,  
"In what way have we wearied *Him*?"  
In that you say,  
"Everyone who does evil  
*Is* good in the sight of the Lord,  
And He delights in them,"  
Or, "Where *is* the God of justice?"

## **MALACHI 3:1-4** **(BEHOLD ME – SENDING MY MESSENGER)**

On the day I typed this sermon, I was both preparing a sermon and also a memorial service for Berk Carico. He was so anxious for the Lord's return that he would get giddy talking about it. He loved to share the word with others, and he reveled over every nuance.

When listening to sermons or Bible studies, there were times when he would suddenly erupt about something in the word, excitedly calling out a meaningful connection to another passage or a clarification of what a particular verse was saying.

When songs were sung, after ending, he would call out the background information about the author or what the author was thinking when the song was written. There was never a time the word wasn't running through his mind.

Just a few days before the memorial service, his son Paul called and said he found a piece of paper with instructions concerning the service. Berk said he wanted me to perform it, that he didn't want any fanfare, and that he wanted his life summed up with a single verse from Romans –

“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” Romans 8:11

Berk was waiting for the Lord, patiently waiting for the One who would come and raise him to eternal life. That day lies ahead for all of us, but are we as antsy as he was?

**Text Verse:** *“And his sons would go and feast in their houses, each on his appointed day, and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. <sup>5</sup> So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, “It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” Thus Job did regularly.” Job 1:4, 5*

Job was performing a priestly function by sacrificing for his family. This was how it was done in ancient days. The head of the house was the one to minister before the Lord. We can infer this began with Adam when reading the story of Cain and Abel.

We can also infer that it continued through Noah's day as well as those after him. The tradition was not lost at the time of Job. But as with all things, if there is not a set procedure, those things will eventually fall into a state not intended by God.

Societies around the world continued to appoint priests. In Canaan, Melchizedek was a priest to God, mediating on behalf of others. In the Mayan culture, they had priests. But their sacrifices were such an abomination that it is hard to describe the wickedness of what they did.

Human sacrifice was on full display, and the blood of their people and their enemies ran like rivers off of their altars. In the New Testament, as I will explain later, ministering the gospel is a priestly service.

Berk was a great expositor of the word and he loved to tell others about it. He would rejoice with every gospel presentation after each sermon. This was important to him. Now, he rests awaiting the promise for his efforts. Rest well, Berk. The Lord is coming.

Remarkable wonders, such as sharing the gospel, are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. The Lord Whom You Seek (verse 1)**

Malachi 2 ended with these words –

Gasped, Yehovah in your words  
And said, "In what gasped?"  
In your saying, "All doing evil good in eye Yehovah.  
And in them He inclined."  
Or, "Where God the verdict?" Malachi 2:17

The Lord will now answer the question of where the God of the verdict is – "Don't fret, guys, He is coming."

<sup>1</sup> **"Behold, I send My messenger,**

*hini sholeakh malakhi* – "Behold Me – Sending My messenger." In Malachi 2:7, it said –

"For lips priest guard knowledge,

And law seek from His mouth.

For messenger Yehovah Sabaoth – he.” Malachi 2:7

The priests were the messengers of the Lord to the people. They were to bear the word of God and relay it to the people in a proper manner. Thus, this doesn't mean a messenger who simply receives prophecies from the Lord. Many non-Levites received a word from the Lord.

Rather, the onus was on the priests to ensure that the word was rightly handled and carefully transmitted to the people. As such one would expect that the person who is being referred to would be of the priestly class. It is a particular messenger sent under the full authority of God to relay a message to the people.

In the words, a pun is set forth based on the name of the prophet Malachi with the words *malakhi*, My messenger, which is identical in Hebrew. Even though the Lord had been sending His messengers, since Aaron, they had failed to uphold the covenant.

However, the context tells the hearer that a particular messenger of the Lord is promised at some point. This is not a messenger, as in any given priest, but His messenger. A particular individual is singled out as the one who would come.

The verb is a participle, sending. It is a simple action in an active voice. The sending could mean at any given point, but because the priest was the messenger of the Lord, it would be assumed that the one mentioned in this verse would be as well. Keil disputes this, saying –

“It is true that in Malachi 2:7 the priest is also called a messenger of Jehovah; but the expression הַנְּבִיאִי שְׁלַח (behold I send) prevents our understanding the term *maleâkh* as referring to the priests, or even as including them, inasmuch as ‘sending’ would not apply to the priests as the standing mediators between the Lord and His people. Moreover, it was because the priests did not fulfil their duty as the ordinary ambassadors of God that the Lord was about to send an extraordinary messenger.”

But that is an unnecessary stretch. That would be like saying, “Because all men failed to fully observe the law, God was going to send a non-human to fulfill the law.” Rather, he sent a human male of the priestly class. Changing categories mid-stream would change the entire dynamic of what God had set up in the institution of the Levitical priesthood.

This is what the Jehovah's Witnesses have done with Jesus by saying He is the Archangel Michael. He may have come as a man, but His manhood would be a mode of existence, not his very nature. Rather, His messenger would be one of the messengers of Malachi 2:7, a priest –

“There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elizabeth.” Luke 1:5

John the Baptist was of the priestly line. As such, in this aspect, which is clearly defined in Scripture, he perfectly fit the qualifications set forth by Malachi based on his words to the priests. John was an appointed messenger of the Lord because of his ancestry.

Therefore, there was no change in the dynamics of what was presented. God ensured that His word over four hundred years later would be exactly fulfilled as expected.

<sup>1</sup> (con't) **And he will prepare the way before Me.**

*u-pinah derekh l'phanai* – “And turned way to My faces.” The words are a reference to Isaiah 40:3: *panu derekh Yehovah* – “Prepare way Yehovah.” The context is –

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
'Prepare the way of the Lord;  
Make straight in the desert  
A highway for our God.’” Isaiah 40:3

This is considered a messianic verse by pretty much everyone. As such, there was the expectation that this one was a person who would herald the coming of the Messiah. Looking back on the words, we have a full sense of what was going on, but at the time, it was somewhat of a mystery.

The words “turned way” or “prepare the way” are borrowed from Isaiah, such as –

“And one shall say,  
'Heap it up! Heap it up!  
Prepare [*panah*] the way,  
Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people.’” Isaiah 57:14

“Go through,  
Go through the gates!  
Prepare [*panah*] the way for the people;  
Build up,  
Build up the highway!  
Take out the stones,  
Lift up a banner for the peoples!  
<sup>11</sup> Indeed the Lord has proclaimed  
To the end of the world:  
“Say to the daughter of Zion,  
‘Surely your salvation is coming;  
Behold, His reward *is* with Him,  
And His work before Him.” Isaiah 62:10, 11

The preparation of the way signifies the removal of stumbling blocks, idolatry, immorality, etc. The sin of the people would be addressed in order to prepare a people for the coming of Yehovah.

And yet, the way was to be prepared for the coming of the Messiah, even though this one was coming to prepare the way for Yehovah. Now we know what was unclear to the people then, that the Messiah is Yehovah, God incarnate, in the Person of Jesus...

<sup>1</sup> (con’t) **And the Lord, whom you seek,  
Will suddenly come to His temple,**

The NKJV reverses the clauses, destroying the emphatic nature of the proclamation:  
*uphithom yavo el hekhalo ha’adon asher atem m’baqshim* –

“And instantly comes unto His temple,  
The Lord, whom you seek.”

The words have gone from the first person, before Me, to the third person, the Lord whom you seek. It is an emphatic way of ensuring that all are to understand the coming One is, in fact, Yehovah. This is fully supported by the word *hekhalo*, His temple.

Solomon may have made a temple, Zerubbabel may have built a temple, and Herod may have expanded Zerubbabel’s greatly, but the temple is the House of Yehovah.

As for the words, “And instantly comes unto His temple,” some scholars claim that this is not in His first coming but in His second. That is incorrect. His second coming will be for the rescue of Israel and the establishment of His kingdom.

It was in His first coming that judgment upon Israel was highlighted. The words are referring to the narrative of Luke 2 –

“Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present *Him* to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the law of the Lord, ‘Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord’), <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, “A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.

<sup>25</sup> And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name *was* Simeon, and this man *was* just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. <sup>27</sup> So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, <sup>28</sup> he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

<sup>29</sup> ‘Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,  
According to Your word;

<sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen Your salvation

<sup>31</sup> Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

<sup>32</sup> A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles,

And the glory of Your people Israel.’” Luke 2:22-32

Jesus, on the day of Mary’s purification, was taken immediately to the temple, His temple, to be presented before Yehovah. The One they were seeking, the “God of the verdict” whom the priests mockingly inquired about in Malachi 2:17, was brought before the priests in the humbled state of a helpless babe. Nothing could be more ironic than that to answer their arrogant question.

In the words, another confirmation of the deity of Christ is found. The word *ha’adon*, the Lord, is one only used in reference to Yehovah. This is consistent in all of its uses where the name Yehovah is affixed to it. For example –

“For behold, the Lord [*ha’adon*], the Lord of hosts,  
Takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah

The stock and the store,  
The whole supply of bread and the whole supply of water.” Isaiah 3:1

There are no exceptions to this. Thus, the One who will come, from a proper scriptural perspective, must be Yehovah incarnate. Taken together with the thought that it is His temple and He is the God of the verdict whom they seek, the words cry out that this will be their God, Yehovah...

<sup>1</sup> (con't) **Even the Messenger of the covenant,**

The words are set in parallel to the words, “The Lord, whom you seek.”: *u-malakh ha'berith* – “And Messenger the covenant.” This is a title found nowhere else in Scripture and it therefore begs the question, “Which covenant?” Abraham was given one. Others such as David (even if it his not explicitly called a covenant at the time) were given covenants. Lange does a great job explaining this –

“From a very early period we find mention of an extraordinary Messenger, or Angel, who is sometimes called the *Angel of God*, at others, the *Angel of Jehovah*. He is represented as the Mediator between the invisible God and men in all God’s communications and dealings with men. To this Angel divine names, attributes, purposes, and acts are ascribed. He occasionally assumed a human form, as in his interviews with Hagar, Abraham, Jacob, Joshua, Gideon, Manoah, and his wife. He went before the camp of Israel on the night of the Exodus. In Exodus 23:20, Jehovah said, “Behold, I send an angel before thee to bring thee into the place, which I have prepared. My name is in him.” In Isaiah 63:9 he is called the Angel of his Presence, or *face*, where there is a reference to Ex. 33:14, 15, where Jehovah said to Moses, ‘My presence (or Hebrew, *My face*) shall go with thee, and Moses said, If thy face go not with us, carry us not up hence.’ He is called the *face of God*, because though no man can see his face and live, yet the Angel of his face is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. In him Jehovah’s presence is manifested, and his glory reflected, for the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ. There is thus a gradual development in the Old Testament of the doctrine of the incarnation, of the distinction of persons in the Godhead, not brought to light fully, lest it should interfere with the doctrine of the unity of God.”

He is right. The angel of the covenant is not merely speaking of the Mosaic Covenant but of the covenant in a general sense. Any covenant with God is its own covenant and is thus a part of “the covenant.” This is the reason why Jesus was not blaspheming when He said these words in fulfillment of Jeremiah 31:31 –

“Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.’” Luke 22:20

Because this coming One is called My Messenger, the Messenger of the Covenant, and yet He is called “the Lord whom you seek,” Keil rightly says, “This identity does not indeed exclude a distinction of person; but it does exclude a difference between the two.” It is a subtle but marvelous hint at the doctrine of the Trinity.

Understanding these things, the Lord, seemingly mockingly, says...

<sup>1 (con’t)</sup> **In whom you delight.**

*asher atem khaphetsim* – “Whom you – delighted.” The word *khaphets* is an adjective, even though almost all translations incorrectly render it a verb. One can almost hear the taunting tone. If you are so delighted in the God of the verdict, get ready.

The Lord is going to totally upend their way of life, their faulty traditions, their mockery of His name, and their shunning of the responsibilities laid upon them. This will become perfectly evident in the gospels where the priests will be some of the primary ones to speak a word of condemnation against Him. They ask for the God of the verdict, and guess what?...

<sup>1 (con’t)</sup> **Behold, He is coming,”  
Says the Lord of hosts.**

*hineh va amar Y’hovah ts’vaoth* –

“Behold! Coming!  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

The words should not be taken as “Great and wonderful things lie ahead,” but more as, “Beware! You don’t realize what you are asking for because your hearts are wicked and your ways are an abomination.”

Instead of learning their lesson, the priests continued to reject the glory of the Lord as well as their responsibilities to the people. This is perfectly evidenced in the life of Caiaphas the high priest at the time of Jesus’ crucifixion. If he was representative of most priests, woe to those of the priesthood.

Thus, when it says, “Said Yehovah Sabaoth,” these priests should quickly turn from their ways and humble themselves. He is coming...

*The Lord whom you seek  
Do you really seek Him?  
He is coming, humble and meek  
But for you, His coming may be grim*

*Before He comes, one will be sent first  
To prepare the way for the Lord’s coming  
In My word, he will be well-versed  
And at his words, anticipation is drumming*

*And then, My Chosen One  
Unto His temple, He shall come  
The time for something new will have begun  
He will refine the priests, even removing some*

*In Him do you really delight?  
Are you sure you are ready for His coming?  
He will do His work, making all things right  
Can’t you already hear the drummers drumming?*

## **II. Refined According to Gold (verses 2-4)**

**<sup>2</sup>“But who can endure the day of His coming?”**

The question is rhetorical, demanding a negative response: *u-mi m’khakel eth yom bo’o* – “And who contains day His coming?”

The word *kul* means to keep in and thus, contain. When a basin holds twenty gallons, it contains that much. Beyond that, it will overflow. Solomon asked –

“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain [*kul*] You. How much less this temple which I have built!”  
-1 Kings 8:27

Thus, when the Lord, through Malachi, says, “And who contains day His coming?” it means, “Who can stop it from coming.” You asked for the God of the verdict, but you

don't really want Him to come. You want to keep living in your aberrant ways. But you cannot stop His arrival. At that time, all things will change...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **And who can stand when He appears?**

*umi ha'omed b'heraotho* – “And who the standing in His appearing?” Though some think the answer also demands a negative response, this is not necessarily so. It is, however, a question that demands one's consideration before attempting to stand.

This is the Lord appearing among the priests of Israel to answer their question, “Where is the God of the verdict?” If they think He is coming to pat them on the back and exalt them for their ways, they should reconsider well. At first, it appeared that few or none of them did. However, in Acts, we read –

“Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.” Acts 6:7

God was not looking to applaud them, He was looking for the same thing He has always looked for in men: faith. These priests believed, meaning they were obedient to the faith. They are those who could stand at His appearing. This is good for them, because Malachi next proclaims in parallel clauses...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **For He is like a refiner's fire  
And like launderers' soap.**

*ki hu k'esh m'tsareph ukvorith m'khabsim* –

“For He according to fire – smelting.  
And according to alkali – washing.”

The picture of fire melting imperfect metals is used quite often in Scripture. The metal is heated until it melts. It continues to be heated until the impurities either burn off or rise to the top and are removed as slag. The process thus purifies the metals, perfecting their purity –

“The words of the Lord *are* pure words,  
*Like* silver tried in a furnace of earth,  
Purified seven times.” Psalm 12:6

As for the word *borith*, alkali, it is found only here and in Jeremiah 2:22. It is derived from *bor*, vegetable lye, such as potash. This *bor* is used for cleansing hands (Job 22:30). It is also used figuratively as a flux for purifying metals (Isaiah 1:25). In Jeremiah 2:22, *borith* is used on the whole body. In this verse, the words are referring to the cleansing and purifying of the priests from the defilement of sin. As it next says...

### **<sup>3</sup> He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver;**

The first verb is in the perfect aspect: *v'yashav m'tsaraph umtahr keseph* – “And sat, smelting and purifying silver.” In the previous verse, the Messenger was equated to the fire, “according to fire – smelting.” Now He is the One who is the smelter and purifier.

The image is of the Messenger having sat upon a throne. He is equated to a Judge or, more likely, a King. His subjects come before Him for judgment. There, He will sit and burn out their impurities. It is similar to what we are told concerning Christ and those in His church –

“Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. <sup>14</sup> If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” 1 Corinthians 3:12-15

In this capacity...

### **<sup>3</sup> (con't) He will purify the sons of Levi,**

*v'tihar eth b'ne levi* – Again, the verb is in the perfect aspect: “And purified sons Levi.” In His sitting, He has accomplished His purification of the priests. This speaks not only of removing those who are unacceptable but purifying those who believe, such as those in Acts 6 noted previously.

This brings back the haunting memory of what occurred at the Babylonian exile –

“Utterly slay old *and* young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom *is* the mark; and begin at My sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who *were* before the temple.” Ezekiel 9:6

Judgment begins at the house of the Lord. This was the case when Jesus came, presented Himself, and then departed. In their rejection of Him, the sons of Levi, meaning the priests first and then all the Levites, would be marked for termination (as a means of purification) or for purification of the person. There will be dross, and there will be those who are purified from the process...

<sup>3 (con't)</sup> **And purge them as gold and silver,**

The translation is lacking and so the intent comes out wrong. And, once again, the perfect aspect is used. It is done in the mind of the Lord: *v'ziqaq otham kazahav v'khakasef* –

“And refined them according to the gold,  
And according to the silver.”

The NKJV focuses on the process, “purge them as.” But the words focus on the result, “according to the gold... the silver.” When gold and silver are refined, the result is purity. This is what is highlighted. No more bad priests, and no more good priests who will occasionally stray. The result will be only priests of perfect righteousness...

<sup>3 (con't)</sup> **That they may offer to the Lord  
An offering in righteousness.**

And again, the first verb is in the perfect aspect: *v'hayu laY'hovah magishe minkhah bitsdaqah* –

“And became to Yehovah –  
Approaching present in righteousness.”

With the purifying process complete, these purified sons of Levi are then acceptable to appropriately perform their duties (and became). With that, their state will be “Approaching present (*minkhah*: an offering (present) to the Lord) in righteousness.”

This is a total rebuke to the intended audience. Chapter 1 spoke of the unacceptable offerings to the Lord – blind and lame, etc. Chapter 2 spoke of the conduct of the priests – mistreating the law, mistreating their wives, etc.

He is directly telling the Levites that they, and those who will later follow after them, will be purged from His sight. What they are offering is an abomination because it lacks

faith. Once the purification is complete what the remaining priests will offer will be acceptable because it is done in faith. As such, it will be offered in righteousness. Again, it takes us right back to Genesis 4, as is explained in Hebrews 11 –

“And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. <sup>4</sup> Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup> but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.”

-Genesis 4:3-5

“By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.” Hebrews 11:4

Innumerable commentaries have been written by Jews, arrogantly claiming that they were a part of the good line descending from Adam, while the line of Cain was despicable. And yet, if they simply considered the words of the Lord to their conduct, they would see the divine finger pointing right at them, “O you sons of Cain.”

The genealogy of a person is not what makes them acceptable to God. Nor is the culture, society, or status. Rather, it is faithfulness to the Lord by accepting His word that pleases Him. When the purification of Levi is accomplished...

#### **<sup>4</sup> “Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem Will be pleasant to the Lord,**

The perfect aspect continues: *v’arvah la’Y’hovah minkhath y’hudah virushalim* – “And sweetened, to Yehovah, present Judah and Jerusalem.” What this is saying is that until the priests are made acceptable, the offerings (*minkhah*: present) of the inhabitants are not acceptable.

However, once they are made acceptable, the offerings of the nation will also be acceptable. The tricky part about this, however, is to understand that this will only occur through the acceptance of the New Covenant. This is set forth in Jeremiah and is fully treated in Hebrews –

“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— <sup>32</sup> not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to

lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. <sup>33</sup> But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. <sup>34</sup> No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." Jeremiah 31:31-34

"Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? <sup>12</sup> For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. <sup>13</sup> For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar." Hebrews 7:11-13

As such, the words of Isaiah 66 find their full sense –

"For I *know* their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory. <sup>19</sup> I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. <sup>20</sup> Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the Lord out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,' says the Lord, "as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. <sup>21</sup> And I will also take some of them for priests *and* Levites," says the Lord.'" Isaiah 66:18-21

Those who enter the new covenant will not need to be in the line of Levi to perform the priestly functions before the altar. But more, the words find a greater fulfillment than just Jews from other tribes. Paul says this in Romans 15 –

"Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. <sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on *some* points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, <sup>16</sup> that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering [*hierourgeó*] the gospel of

God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:14-16

The word *hierourgeó* comes from *hieron*, temple, and *ergon*, work. As such, it is a worker at the temple and thus, a priest. Paul was of Benjamin, and yet he says that he is performing a priestly service. As the service is temple work concerning the gospel of God, then it seems to logically follow that anyone who comes after him in the same work of sharing the gospel would be doing the same thing.

Paul’s work set the baseline for the Gentiles to serve, but those who follow after him, Jew or Gentile are performing the same service when they take what Paul says and convey it to others. Though the term is not used in this sense beyond Paul, it is hard to see how this could not be the case.

Thus, it appears this is exactly what Isaiah is referring to, even though he is speaking of a later dispensation when Christ will reign in Jerusalem.

<sup>4 (fin)</sup> **As in the days of old,  
As in former years.**

*kime olam ukhshanim qadmoniyoth –*

“According to days concealed,  
And according to years anterior.”

This probably is not specifically referring to the earlier priests under the law of Moses. It would be hard to find a handful who were faithful to the law. There are some, but for the most part, the history of the priesthood was one of apostasy from its inception.

The wording probably actually refers to the priestly class within families, such as Job, as well as known priests of righteousness, such as Melchizedek. They, along with those like Samuel and Jehoiada (2 Kings 12) who served under the Law of Moses, form a select number of priests who faithfully followed the Lord.

These extended back to ancient times and a few in more recent times, but besides them, the priesthood was constantly stained with nothing but apostasy and turning from the Lord.

The verses are complete for today, but they have been filled with details that show the minute attention by God to His word, showing that events distanced by the span of time meld together into a harmonious whole which tell of a great plan set forth all along.

God is in control of time because He created it. Within that stream, our existence is realized for a breath of a moment. Berk Carico was a little child just a heartbeat ago. And yet, he had a full life, filled with honor and care for the word of God.

He ministered to us and to so many others faithfully. He performed a priestly duty in sharing the gospel of God with others. Are we doing likewise? Our day for expiration is set. God already knows it. In this church, we have had heart problems (galore).

Were it not for modern medicine, the seats would be far emptier than they are now. We have had accidents, traumas, near-death experiences, etc. Apparently, God has kept us alive for a reason. Will we seize the grace we have been bestowed and do what is right? Each of us has to decide.

Let us be responsible and determine that our lives will be dedicated, henceforth, to serving this wonderful God who sent His Messenger to purify a people unto Himself. Jesus! All hail the name of Jesus.

**Closing Verse:** *“And the Levites who went far from Me, when Israel went astray, who strayed away from Me after their idols, they shall bear their iniquity.” ... “But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer to Me the fat and the blood,” says the Lord God.”*

*-Ezekiel 44:10 & 15*

**Next Week:** Malachi 3:5-6 For I, Yehovah! Not Transmuted

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He has sent His Messenger to carry the good news to all people. Jesus! God promised, and God delivered. The time of the law has ended, and grace has come. Praise God for Jesus.

**Malachi 3:1-4 (CG)**

“Behold Me – Sending My messenger,  
And turned way to My faces

And instantly comes unto His temple,  
The Lord, whom you seek,  
And Messenger the covenant,  
Whom you – delighted.  
Behold! Coming!  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”  
<sup>2</sup>““And who contains day His coming?  
And who the standing in His appearing?  
For He according to fire – smelting.  
And according to alkali – washing.  
<sup>3</sup>And sat, smelting and purifying silver,  
And purified sons Levi.  
And refined them according to the gold,  
And according to the silver.  
And became to Yehovah –  
Approaching present in righteousness.  
<sup>4</sup>And sweetened, to Yehovah, present Judah and Jerusalem,  
According to days concealed,  
And according to years anterior.

### **Malachi 3:1-4 (NKJV)**

“Behold, I send My messenger,  
And he will prepare the way before Me.  
And the Lord, whom you seek,  
Will suddenly come to His temple,  
Even the Messenger of the covenant,  
In whom you delight.  
Behold, He is coming,”  
Says the Lord of hosts.  
<sup>2</sup>“But who can endure the day of His coming?  
And who can stand when He appears?  
For He *is* like a refiner’s fire  
And like launderers’ soap.  
<sup>3</sup>He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver;  
He will purify the sons of Levi,  
And purge them as gold and silver,  
That they may offer to the Lord  
An offering in righteousness.

<sup>4</sup>“Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem  
Will be pleasant to the Lord,  
As in the days of old,  
As in former years.

## **MALACHI 3:5-6 (FOR I, YEHOVAH! NOT TRANSMUTED)**

In what is presented today, I will cite more Scripture than I may have ever done in a sermon before. It will be a journey through much of the Bible, explaining the relationship of Israel to the world around her.

The few words of these two verses are literally filled with truths about Israel, their conduct before the Lord and their attitude towards Him, their position in relation to the New Covenant, and their precarious and yet forever firm state before Yehovah.

If Israel would simply read and contemplate what is said in just these two verses, rightly considering them as they are given, they would save themselves an unimaginable amount of grief. And yet, they have been published and available to them for almost 2500 years, and they have never paid attention to them.

But it is so much easier to not be bothered with God's word. That is what the rabbi is for, right? It's like most people in churches today. They let the pastor, preacher, or priest worry about the Bible. Whatever is presented from them concerning it will be sufficient.

It is not a good way to handle one's theology. Trusting someone else with your relationship with God is like trusting politicians with your money. It usually doesn't work out so well.

**Text Verse:** *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Hebrews 13:8*

Reread those words. Notice it does not say, "Jesus is the same..." It would be a false statement. Jesus was born. "...Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52). Jesus wept. Jesus got pretty miffed with the merchants and money changers in the temple. Jesus died.

There was potential in Jesus during His earthly ministry. He had the potential to do all these things and so many more –

"And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen." John 21:25

Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ *is* the same...” God in Christ united with humanity. There is the Babe who became a Man, and there is the unchanged, untransmutable, immortal God in whom there is only pure actuality with no potential for change in any manner at any time.

Jesus is the One who came to make this unchanging and seemingly uncaring God knowable to us. He is the One who shows us that even though God cannot change, He is not uncaring. He is not One who created just to revel over death and destruction. Rather, He is the God. The One whom we change in relation to.

Jesus came to correct our thinking and to align His people with this unchanging God so that when we do change, even in a negative way, we will not be destroyed. At least Israel (as a nation) has that on her side. If not, she would have perished long, long ago.

Great truths such as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. No Fear of the Lord (verse 5)**

Malachi 3:5 is a head breaker. It is filled with plural verbs...

**<sup>5</sup> And I will come near you for judgment;**

*v'qaravti alekhem lamishpat* – “And neared unto you to the judgment.” These words respond to Malachi 2:17 –

“Gasped, Yehovah in your words  
And said, ‘In what gasped?’  
In your saying, ‘All doing evil good in eye Yehovah.  
And in them He inclined.’  
Or, ‘Where God the verdict?’”

The people were saying that everyone doing evil was good in Yehovah’s eyes. It is the same mindset that much of Israel carries to this day. If they believe in God at all, they are ok doing whatever because God loves them for who they are, not for what they do or what their faith in Him is.

They believed and continue to believe that God inclined toward them because they are Israel. And so, their natural, even mocking, question was, “Where God the verdict?” All is ok. We know God favors us.

If you tell a Jew that their exile and last two thousand years of punishment is their fault, they will normally either stare at you with a blank face as if, “What are you talking about?” or they will get angry and accuse you of being an antisemite.

On rare occasion, one will stop and think, “I never thought of it that way.” It is that type who is most prone to accepting the gospel. They know that they have a problem that has carried on seemingly forever, but they can’t put their finger on it.

All of a sudden, all of the lies about Jesus that have been heaped on them by their rabbis for eons are suddenly dispelled, and they think, “So this is the reason!” It is as if a lightbulb illuminates what the Lord has been trying to tell them all along.

Well, Yehovah is telling them right here in Malachi that He was going to near unto them the judgment, meaning He was going to purify them, just as He has been saying. Malachi 2:2-4 first addressed the house of Levi, meaning the priests and the Levites. Judgment begins at the house of the Lord. From there, it extends outward to the people. When He comes to judge, He next says...

<sup>5 (con’t)</sup> **I will be a swift witness**

*v’hayiti ed m’maher* – “And became witness hastening.” A purging of the people would come swiftly as the Lord Himself would witness against them. But one might ask, “How can this be when Jesus came to heal, restore, and give life, not judge?”

That would be a complete misunderstanding of what is going on. For example, the Pulpit Commentary says, “The announcement applies especially to the circumstances of Malachi’s time, though, of course, it has an extended reference.”

This is entirely incorrect. There is no reference to judgment after the book of Malachi was written. This is because Malachi closes out the Old Testament canon. The Lord just said in Malachi 3:1 that He was sending His messenger to prepare the way and then the Lord would instantly come to His temple.

The entire narrative hinges on that thought. The people were given warning. It is true that the people had a high expectation of the coming Messiah. That is evidenced in the gospels –

“Now some of them from Jerusalem said, ‘Is this not He whom they seek to kill? <sup>26</sup> But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ? <sup>27</sup> However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from.’” John 7:25-27

This sentiment is repeated elsewhere in the gospels. It was even understood by those who were not considered the covenant people –

“The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’

<sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am *He*.’” John 4:25, 26

When the Sanhedrin was called together for Jesus’ trial, they specifically asked Him if He was the Christ. This demonstrates that it was fully understood that the Messiah was coming.

Based on the timeline of Daniel 9, of which every competent rabbi would have been aware, they knew Messiah’s coming would be before the temple was destroyed. And more, the prophecy told them the exact timing it would occur.

This is why the expectation of His coming was so high. They obviously believed the Scriptures, clung to them, and anticipated good things from them. And yet, they failed to actually consider them in context.

A destroyed temple meant they were out of favor with Yehovah. Malachi’s words told them that judgment on them, not the nations, was coming. This was a case of selective bias, and it was to be their doom. Jesus did come to heal, restore, and give life, not judge.

He did those things during His earthly ministry. Those who accepted Him would be provided those things abundantly by Him. But that is not the end of the story. When His earthly ministry was complete, and in the rejection of that by Israel, the Lord was set to purify the people –

“For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans, <sup>15</sup> who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, <sup>16</sup> forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up *the measure of* their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.” 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16

Jesus even told them this, in advance, so that they were without excuse –

“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. <sup>21</sup> Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. <sup>22</sup> For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. <sup>23</sup> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. <sup>24</sup> And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” Luke 21:20-24

Why did this come about? Because Israel rejected the Messenger of the covenant, Jesus. They failed to acknowledge Him, rejecting the New Covenant, and thus, the curses of the Mosaic Covenant came upon them to the fullest extent.

The God of grace and peace who stood among them was rejected. In His departure, He stood against them. If people, especially Israel, would just pick up the book and read it, they would see why all the disasters of the past two thousand years have come upon them.

The clan of the Levites has been addressed. Now, the Lord will speak against all of those who would likewise be purified from Israel. This judgment would start...

<sup>5</sup> (con't) **Against sorcerers,**

*bamkhashphim* – “In the incantings.” The word is *kashaph*, coming from an unused root signifying to whisper a spell, thus it is one who practices incantations, such as a sorcerer or a witch. This was expressly forbidden three times in the Law of Moses, in Exodus 7:11, Exodus 22:18, and Deuteronomy 18:10.

The penalty was death, “You shall not permit a sorceress to live” (Exodus 22:18). And yet, the people often practiced this. It was even spurred on and openly condoned by King Manasseh –

“He also built altars in the house of the Lord, of which the Lord had said, “In Jerusalem shall My name be forever.” <sup>5</sup> And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord. <sup>6</sup> Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery [*kashaph*], and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger.”

-2 Chronicles 33:4-6

This was still practiced in the New Testament, such as in Acts –

“Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, <sup>7</sup> who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. <sup>8</sup> But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.” Acts 13:6-8

To this day, sorcery is still practiced in Israel as has been seen in news articles over the past years. These are the types of people who are to be purged from the nation by Yehovah. Next, he says...

<sup>5</sup> (con't) **Against adulterers,**

*u-vamnaaphim* – “And in the adulterings.” It is one of the most common sins of man and is not limited to Israel. Unfaithfulness to the covenant of marriage is simply an extension of an attitude that begins with unfaithfulness to the Lord. As such, there is a dual meaning to the words.

It is true that the people were (and are) prone to physical acts of adultery against their wives or husbands. That is seen, for example, in John 8 –

“Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, <sup>4</sup> they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act.” John 8:3, 4

The woman did wrong and was brought before the Lord for judgment. However, those who brought her forward were just as guilty of adultery against the Lord –

“The man who commits adultery with *another* man’s wife, *he* who commits adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death.” Leviticus 20:10

They played the harlot with the law in order to attempt to trap Jesus in the decision He rendered. For all we know, He may have written Leviticus 20:10 in the sand and asked them why they had betrayed the Lord through their actions, sparing the man, but accusing the woman.

As a nation, Jesus openly rebuked them for their attitude –

“Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, ‘Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.’

<sup>39</sup> But He answered and said to them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.’”

-Matthew 12:38, 39

Jesus accused them of being an adulterous generation because instead of going to the Lord, through His word, they wanted an easy end-around to obtain proof of His messiahship. It is like many Charismatic churches today. To neglect His word is an implicit reference to rejecting Him. Continuing on...

<sup>5</sup> (con’t) **Against perjurers,**

*u-vanishbaim lashaqer* – “And in the swearings to the untruth.” The word is *sheqer*, an untruth. It is one of the Big Ten –

“You shall not bear false [*sheqer*] witness against your neighbor.” Exodus 20:16

This is something noted throughout the Old Testament, which included false prophesying. Israel was famous for it, continuing into the New Testament. It is as common as stones in a gravel pit in both the world at large and in the church today.

Inability to tell the truth is one of the most common infections that humans face. It is especially grievous when done in the name of the Lord. False prophecies, whether in Israel or in the church, are common.

The Lord, to Israel, said He would purge this from the people. This will be so much the case that in the future, this is prophesied –

“It shall come to pass *that* if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who begot him will say to him, ‘You shall not live, because you have spoken lies [*sheqer*] in the name of the Lord.’ And his father and mother who begot him shall thrust him through when he prophesies.” Zechariah 13:3

And the Lord, through Malachi, continues...

<sup>5</sup> (con’t) **Against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans,**

*u-voshqe s’khar shakhir almanah v’yathom* – “And in oppressing salary salaried, widow, and orphan.” The first offense is specifically mentioned in the law a couple of times. For example –

“You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob *him*. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning.” Leviticus 19:13

The Lord, through Moses, explains why in Deuteronomy –

“You shall not oppress a hired servant *who is* poor and needy, *whether* one of your brethren or one of the aliens who *is* in your land within your gates. <sup>15</sup> Each day you shall give *him* his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he *is* poor and has set his heart on it; lest he cry out against you to the Lord, and it be sin to you.” Deuteronomy 24:14, 15

The person who was hired as a wage earner had his own necessities to tend to. If they were not met, his life could be endangered, or his home or possessions could be lost because of debts. For those who did not pay those as promised, the Lord would deal harshly with them, purging them from the people.

Likewise, the widow and orphan were protected by the Lord, as already stated eons earlier in the Law of Moses –

“You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. <sup>23</sup> If you afflict them in any way, *and* they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry; <sup>24</sup> and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.” Exodus 22:22-24

In failing to hold to this precept, Zechariah told Israel that it was one of the reasons they were going into exile –

“Then the word of the Lord came to Zechariah, saying, <sup>9</sup> ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts:

“Execute true justice,  
Show mercy and compassion  
Everyone to his brother.

<sup>10</sup> Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless,  
The alien or the poor.

Let none of you plan evil in his heart  
Against his brother.’

<sup>11</sup> ‘But they refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear. <sup>12</sup> Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Thus great wrath came from the Lord of hosts. <sup>13</sup> Therefore it happened, *that* just as He proclaimed and they would not hear, so they called out and I would not listen,’ says the Lord of hosts. <sup>14</sup> ‘But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations which they had not known. Thus the land became desolate after them, so that no one passed through or returned; for they made the pleasant land desolate.’” Zechariah 7:8-14

As the Lord is the Lord, Israel knew the Lord’s expectation for their treatment of others. Nehemiah understood this –

“And I said to them, ‘According to our ability we have redeemed our Jewish brethren who were sold to the nations. Now indeed, will you even sell your brethren? Or should they be sold to us?’

Then they were silenced and found nothing *to say*. <sup>9</sup> Then I said, ‘What you are doing *is* not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies? <sup>10</sup> I also, *with* my brethren and my servants, am lending them money and grain. Please, let us stop this usury! <sup>11</sup> Restore now to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their olive groves, and their houses, also a hundredth of the money and the grain, the new wine and the oil, that you have charged them.’” Nehemiah 5:8-11

This attitude remained at the time of Jesus, especially from those who were supposed to be the stewards of the law –

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.” Matthew 23:14

The repetitive nature of Israel’s sin is seen throughout Scripture. If there is one overarching lesson we can learn, it is that law solves nothing. Rather, it only exacerbates the problem. It is the grace of Christ that alone can turn people away from constantly returning to their own vomit and grading themselves on a bell curve that does not exist.

<sup>5</sup> (con’t) **And against those who turn away an alien—**

*u-mate ger* – “And deflectings sojourner.” The first word is *natah*. It signifies to stretch out or incline. However, in this case, it is figuratively used in the sense of moral deflection. One can see a stranger, a *ger*, being pushed away from the front door of the house.

Again, it is a precept found in the law. One time, it is listed as one of the heinous crimes worthy of an audible curse before the Lord –

“Cursed *is* the one who perverts the justice due the stranger [*ger*], the fatherless, and widow.” Deuteronomy 27:19

The word *ger* signifies a guest and, thus, by implication, a foreigner. He is someone sojourning in an area or land. Moses himself was an example to Israel of this lesson –

“Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. <sup>17</sup> Then the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

<sup>18</sup> When they came to Reuel their father, he said, ‘How *is it that* you have come so soon today?’

<sup>19</sup> And they said, ‘An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and he also drew enough water for us and watered the flock.’

<sup>20</sup> So he said to his daughters, ‘And where *is* he? Why *is it that* you have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread.’

<sup>21</sup> Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses. <sup>22</sup> And she bore *him* a son. He called his name Gershom, for he said, ‘I have been a stranger in a foreign land.’” Exodus 2:16-22

Job, who was outside of the covenant people and not bound to the law of Moses understood this precept –

“(But no sojourner had to lodge in the street,  
For I have opened my doors to the traveler).” Job 31:32

And, of course, there are Jesus’ unforgettable words in Luke 10 that give us all we need to know about this principle –

“Then Jesus answered and said: ‘A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead. <sup>31</sup> Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. <sup>34</sup> So he went to *him* and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave *them* to the innkeeper, and said to him, “Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.” <sup>36</sup> So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?’

<sup>37</sup> And he said, ‘He who showed mercy on him.’

Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.” Luke 10:30-37

This is exactly the type of person the law demanded tending to and not deflecting away. Both the priest and the Levite, stewards of the Law of Moses, would have been fully aware. Despite this, they shunned their responsibilities under the law.

And yet, a Samaritan, one of those held in contempt by the Jews, was willing to not only tend to this person but to extend himself beyond anything the law required out of human decency.

James expanded on the words of this verse and said the following to his audience –

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”

-James 1:27

Such people were set to be purified from the people of Israel. This began at Pentecost. It has continued unabated for two millennia, and yet, the people, to this day, have not learned their lesson.

Next stop, the tribulation period, meaning the time of Jacob's trouble. At that time, the refining process will go into overdrive making ready a people for the return of Jesus. And all of this...

<sup>5 (con't)</sup> **Because they do not fear Me,"  
Says the Lord of hosts.**

*v'lo y'reuni amar Y'hovah ts'vaoth –*

“‘And no feared Me.’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

These words were the basis for every evil and wicked thing the people did. They stood at the base of Mount Sinai and heard the words of the Lord. As they stood and heard, they feared and spoke to Moses about what should take place –

“Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it*, they trembled and stood afar off. <sup>19</sup>Then they said to Moses, ‘You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.’” Exodus 20:18, 19

In the comparable account in Deuteronomy 5, Moses explained what the Lord's reaction to their words was –

“Then the Lord heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the Lord said to me: ‘I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right *in* all that they have spoken. <sup>29</sup>Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!’”  
-Deuteronomy 5:28, 29

However, the problem is that they did not have such a heart in them. Instead, they almost immediately rejected Him and turned to idolatry. For the rest of their years, they tottered between obedience to the Lord and outright apostasy from Him.

As seen in Judges, by the time of Moses' grandson, the people were steeped in idolatry. Time and again, the Lord brought judgment against them. Eventually, they would cry out to Him for help and He would return and tend to them.

But no sooner did they receive relief than they went right back to their wicked ways. With all of this ongoing warning, punishment, and return, one would think Israel would have learned its lesson. But such was never the case. The law, a device intended to instruct them and lead them to Christ, became their object of idolatry.

Instead of fearing the Lord, they feared the law, given by the Lord, ascribing it to Moses. He and what he epitomized became their focus. The Lord, incredibly, was relegated to an afterthought in all they did.

With Him out of their primary focus, they could manipulate the law in any way that suited them, ignoring or twisting anything inconvenient.

To this day, this can be seen in any rabbi or teacher of the law, right on YouTube. If you read and know the Bible, you will need Tums or Pepto Bismol because of what you hear.

However, Moses was only the middleman in the process of receiving the law. It came directly from the Lord. Moses carefully penned, letter by letter and dash by dash, every single precept so that there would be no mistaking in the Lord's intent –

“For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.” Matthew 5:18

The jot equates to the Hebrew *yod* (י), the tenth and smallest letter of the aleph-beth. It would be easy to miss a jot when transcribing a document. The tittle equates to a dash used in making a letter. Some letters are so close in appearance that the smallest mark distinguishes each –

כ ב – beith and kaph

ך ך – daleth and resh

הה תחה – he, kheth, tav

The slightest change in these or other letters can change the entire meaning of what is being said. As for Jesus' words, the meaning is that there can be no change in the word of the Lord. It is fixed, unchanging, and binding. All who are under the law will be judged by every precept set forth in it... until all of it is fulfilled by them or for them.

That was done by Jesus. Any who come to Him by faith are released from that bondage and enter into a new economy under a New Covenant. Those who do not remain bound to the burdensome law by which they will be judged according to Christ's perfect fulfillment of it. Their end will not be happy...

*The Lord God Omnipotent! He reigns!  
He in whom there is no change, no shadow of turning  
He alone has broken our chains  
It is for Him that our souls are deeply burning*

*We shall forever hail He who was, and is, and who is to come  
The One who spoke it all into existence long ago  
From age to age He directs every outcome  
Because from the first, every moment after He did know*

*The Lord God! Hail the name of Jesus!  
Who came to show us the perfect way  
Look and behold what He has done for us!  
God in Christ has introduced His perfect Day*

## **II. Not Ended (verse 6)**

**<sup>6</sup>“For I *am* the Lord, I do not change;**

*ki ani Y'hovah lo shaniti* – “For I, Yehovah! Not transmuted.” The name Yehovah is not a predicate to the subject I, as in “I am Yehovah.” Rather the words are set in apposition, being grammatically parallel, one confirming the other – “For I, Yehovah, I...”

This is apparent from the next clause where the words “you” and “sons of Jacob” are likewise set in apposition. Thus, the Lord is making an absolute proclamation about Himself. As for that declaration, it is, “Not transmuted.” The word I is implied in the verb. The word itself, *shanah*, signifies to duplicate.

Thus, in this case, it means that there is no duplication in the Lord, meaning in form, nature, or substance. He is as stated in Exodus 3 –

“And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.”’” Exodus 3:14

God is. He does not bend to His creation, nor is He uncaring toward it. Time does not affect Him. Change implies an imperfection. In God, there is no change. Aristotle called this Act. There is no Act in God. God is.

On the other hand, there is potential. Potential implies the ability for something to change. I was young, now I am old(er). I had curly blond hair. Now, I have little hair, mostly gray. I am content, and then I am dissatisfied and angry. My car rusts and corrodes.

God does not “get” angry, something that would occur in time. Rather, like a person sitting on one side of a pillar or another, the individual is either on the right side of God or on the wrong side. But God is the unmoved Mover. He is the unchanging Force in whose sight we change.

Introducing the law does not change God. Setting aside the law and establishing a New Covenant does not mean God has changed. God set forth a plan that has been at work since the creation of the universe. It is we who are to respond to what He has ordained.

God is not uncaring about death, but it also does not affect Him, bringing sorrow. Each thing that occurs is in accord with His plan. We are the ones who respond to it and, thus, we are the ones who react inappropriately toward Him when things don't go our way –

“You will say to me then, ‘Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?’<sup>20</sup> But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed *it*, ‘Why have you made me like this?’<sup>21</sup> Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

<sup>22</sup> *What* if God, wanting to show *His* wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,<sup>23</sup> and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,<sup>24</sup> even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?” Romans 9:19-24

Indeed, how presumptuous for us to shake our puny fists in God's face and call His purposes into question! A beginning to all things implies a Beginner. A Beginner implies immutability –

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1

This is His ordered system and we are participants in it. It is our responsibility as mature humans to accept that and not act in nastiness against His perfection –

“Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. <sup>21</sup> And he said:

‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb,  
And naked shall I return there.

The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away;  
Blessed be the name of the Lord.’

<sup>22</sup> In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.” Job 1:20-22

It is unconscionable to curse God for our misfortunes without understanding the simplest of His ways. And His ways include an absolute binding nature to His covenants. He will faithfully uphold them without ever missing the fulfillment of a jot or tittle of what He has said...

<sup>6 (fin)</sup> **Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.**

*v’atem b’ne ya’aqov lo kh’litem* – “And you, sons Jacob, not ended.” With Israel under the sternest condemnation for their appalling attitude and conduct toward the Lord, why would He say this to them now?

It is because He had already told them that, despite their conduct, He would preserve Israel forever. The words signify that it is for this, and only this reason that He would not just utterly swat them away –

“And He said: ‘Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom you *are* shall see the work of the Lord. For it *is* an awesome thing that I will do with you.’” Exodus 34:10

“Thus says the Lord,  
Who gives the sun for a light by day,  
The ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night,  
Who disturbs the sea,  
And its waves roar

(The Lord of hosts *is* His name):

<sup>36</sup> ‘If those ordinances depart  
From before Me, says the Lord,

*Then the seed of Israel shall also cease  
From being a nation before Me forever.’  
37 Thus says the Lord:  
‘If heaven above can be measured,  
And the foundations of the earth searched out beneath,  
I will also cast off all the seed of Israel  
For all that they have done, says the Lord.’” Jeremiah 31:35-37*

Unfortunately, the Jews, even to this day and as I have personally seen, take these words to mean that the Lord will always favor Israel, no matter what they do. This is entirely incorrect according to His word through Malachi. Rather, it is solely because the Lord covenanted with them.

They will be brought into the New Covenant and they will loathe themselves and their conduct for eons of ignoring Him and bringing disgrace and discredit upon His name –

*“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. <sup>11</sup> In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.”*

*-Zechariah 12:10, 11*

These words are a prophecy of the future and they will come in their due time. It is because the Lord is not transmuted that they will come to pass. He has spoken, and it will come to pass. Amen.

**Closing Verse:** *“That which is has already been,  
And what is to be has already been;  
And God requires an account of what is past.” Ecclesiastes 3:15*

**Next Week:** Malachi 3:7-12 Something mandated upon Israel the nation... (The Tithe and the Oblation) (8<sup>th</sup> Malachi Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He has sent His Messenger to carry the good news to all people. Jesus! God promised, and God delivered. The time of the law has ended, and grace has come. Praise God for Jesus.

### **Malachi 3:5-6 (CG)**

<sup>5</sup> And neared unto you to the judgment.  
And became witness hastening,  
In the incantings,  
And in the adulterings,  
And in the swearings to the untruth,  
And in oppressings salary salaried, widow, and orphan,  
And deflectings sojourner,  
And no feared Me.’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”  
<sup>6</sup> “For I, Yehovah! Not transmuted.  
And you, sons Jacob, not ended.

### **Malachi 3:5-6 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> And I will come near you for judgment;  
I will be a swift witness  
Against sorcerers,  
Against adulterers,  
Against perjurers,  
Against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans,  
And against those who turn away an alien—  
Because they do not fear Me,”  
Says the Lord of hosts.  
<sup>6</sup> “For I *am* the Lord, I do not change;  
Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.

## **MALACHI 3:7-12** **(THE TITHE AND THE OBLATION)**

In the verses today, some of the most often quoted and yet completely misapplied verses are found in Scripture. They are cited every weekend in churches throughout the world. They are read on Christian TV and in evangelistic crusades. They are found in innumerable commentaries and sermons as well.

And yet, they have absolutely nothing to do with the Christian church except for understanding what Israel as a nation could expect from God for faithful obedience to His law.

The Lord, through Malachi, said that Israel was defrauding God by failing to honor Him through the system of tithes established in the Law of Moses. Here are a couple of toughies for you. Think carefully. If you need time to answer, you won't get it. We have a sermon to get through. But give it your best shot.

Who was the Law of Moses given to? Was the Law of Moses given to any other group of people on the planet? Did Jesus fulfill the Law of Moses? What happened to the law when Jesus fulfilled it?

In annulling the law, what did Jesus introduce? In coming to God through Jesus, do we enter into the Mosaic Covenant or the New Covenant? Was tithing a precept of the Mosaic Covenant? Is tithing a precept of the New Covenant?

Why do people keep shoving tithing down people's throats with verses that have nothing to do with either the New Covenant or the church founded by the New Covenant?

Like everything else, the precepts of the law anticipate Jesus. This includes tithing. If Israel was robbing God by failing to tithe, and if Jesus is the fulfillment of the tithe, then how can we rob God by failing to tithe? We are in Christ, the fulfillment of the tithe! Think it through.

**Text Verse:** *"And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, <sup>14</sup> having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross."* Colossians 2:13, 14

The “handwriting of requirements” mentioned in the text verse is the Law of Moses. To wipe out means to erase. It no longer exists as a part of God’s plan for His people. Rather, it exists as a point of enmity between Him and the people of Israel.

Their failure to come to Christ has brought all of the catastrophes that they have faced for two millennia upon them. They remain bound to the law and outside of God’s favor. So no, you are not robbing from God when you don’t tithe. You will not get special blessings poured out from heaven when you do tithe.

How do you rob God? By being ungrateful for the blessings in Christ that He has provided. When we fail to thank and praise Him, we rob Him of His just due.

That means when we fail to come to Him through Jesus, we are actively robbing Him. As noted, Jesus is the fulfillment of the tithe. To fail to acknowledge Jesus as Savior is to rob God. It isn’t money God is looking for from you. Rather, He expects His Son to be honored. Jesus said this explicitly in John 5:23, “He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”

Theology is important. Proper theology actually matters. When we get our understanding of God and what He expects wrong, we only harm ourselves. Be ready to put in the time necessary to get these things right! It is a certain truth that is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. Return Unto Me (verses 7-9)**

**<sup>7</sup>Yet from the days of your fathers  
You have gone away from My ordinances  
And have not kept *them*.**

*l'mime avothekhem sartem mekhuqay v'lo sh'martem –*

“To from days your fathers,  
Veered from My enactments,  
And not guarded.”

What is the Lord saying here? He just got done telling them –

“For I *am* the Lord, I do not change;  
Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.” Malachi 3:6

Immediately after saying that, He brings in the fathers of the people, meaning those of the past, even to their inception as the people of Yehovah at Mount Sinai. As E.B. Pusey says –

“Back to those days and from them, ye are gone away from My ordinances. ‘I am not changed from good; ye are not changed from evil. I am unchangeable in holiness; ye are unchangeable in perversity.’”

Throughout their history, Israel has continuously turned from the Lord, veering off the path of His enactments. They failed to guard the sacred charge given to them, which is known as the Law of Moses. Even with the warnings of the prophets both in real-time and then in their recorded history, the witness of the Lord through His word stood against them.

But they are Israel, and He is Yehovah. Despite their unfaithfulness, He remained unchanging and thus faithful to His word. Therefore, the eternal promises stand...

<sup>7 (con't)</sup> **Return to Me,**

*shuvu elay* – “Return unto Me.” The words, without any disputation, signify free will. Admittedly, it is the nation being referred to, but the nation is comprised of individuals. There is a leader, there are subordinates, there are priests and Levites, etc.

As a nation of individuals, they are called to return to the Lord. The doctrine that denies free will in man is proven false throughout Scripture. When man returns to the Lord, and in this case of the nation of Israel, the promise is given...

<sup>7 (con't)</sup> **and I will return to you,”  
Says the Lord of hosts.**

The words contain a cohortative: *v'ashuvah alekhem amar Y'hovah ts'vaoth* –

“And I am returning unto you.”  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

Being a cohortative, it is an absolute and imperative promise. “In returning to Me, I will most assuredly return to you.” It is the same thought that Zechariah spoke to the people around the time of Malachi –

“The Lord has been very angry with your fathers. <sup>3</sup>Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Return to Me,” says the Lord of hosts, “and I will return to you,” says the Lord of hosts.’” Zechariah 1:2, 3

The unchangeable nature of Yehovah has spoken the words with all certainty: “When this, therefore this.” But Israel egged on the Lord with their own exclamation of supposed innocence...

<sup>7</sup> (con’t) **“But you said,  
‘In what way shall we return?’**

*vaamartem bameh nashuv* – “And said, ‘In what returning?’” “What are You talking about? How have we offended? What have we done wrong?” To this day, it is almost a united voice from the people of Israel. With the exception of a teeny minority who have called on Christ, the nation expects that being the people of the Lord makes them right with God simply because they exist.

As this is so, how can they “return” to Yehovah? The dilemma for them now is even greater than at the time of Malachi. They are asked to return to the Lord through observing and upholding the Law of Moses.

To this day, they don’t do that. Today, they are told to return to Him by receiving Christ, the Fulfiller of the Law of Moses. But to the nation, it is all but unthinkable to even utter such words. As for the points of law at Malachi’s time...

<sup>8</sup> **“Will a man rob God?  
Yet you have robbed Me!**

It is a failed translation. The verb is a participle: *hayiqba adam elohim ki atem qovim othi*–

“Defrauds man God?  
For you defrauding Me.”

God is the Provider of all things. If there is something that He expects in return from His creatures, and if that expectation is not met, then God is defrauded of His just due. It is unconscionable to even consider such a thing. And yet, it is as common as pixels on a computer screen.

In the case of the nation of Israel, Yehovah, through Malachi, says that this is not only something that has taken place, but it is ongoing, thus the use of the participle – “defrauding.” What is being defrauded should be perfectly obvious to the people, and indeed it is. However, they again needle the Lord with their incredulity...

<sup>8</sup> (con't) **But you say,  
'In what way have we robbed You?'**

*vaamartem bameh q'vaanukha* – “And say, ‘In what defrauded You?’” Israel is like the child with chocolate smeared all over his face and fingers who acts as if he has done nothing wrong when asked about the cookies he has been sneaking. “Wha... huh? I didn’t do anything wrong.” But Yehovah says otherwise...

<sup>8</sup> (con't) **In tithes and offerings.**

Rather: *hamaaser v'hat'rumah* – “The tithe and the oblation.” Yehovah simply states the words of law without additions. Consider a cop arresting someone for murder, and the murderer says, “What are you talking about? Where is your proof?” With that, the cop pulls the bloody knife out of the guy’s pocket and says, “This knife, covered in his blood.”

Israel owes the tithes to the Lord, and the people have failed to give Him what He is due. Even to the present moment, they are defrauding Him. But how could this matter? As Yehovah says –

“I will not take a bull from your house,  
Nor goats out of your folds.

<sup>10</sup> For every beast of the forest *is* Mine,  
And the cattle on a thousand hills.” Psalm 50:9, 10

If the Lord isn’t taking a bull or a goat (as required oblations), then what is He all upset about? How can He say one thing and then another? Such thinking, however, fails to acknowledge the context. What is the purpose of the tithe and oblation?

It isn't as if the Lord needs them. Therefore, the purpose of these things is tied up in His nature towards the appropriate recipients of them. Of Yehovah, Moses said –

“He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.” Deuteronomy 10:18

He says such things about the poor and needy as well. In fact, the only other time the word *qaba*, to defraud, is used outside of Malachi 3:8, 9 is in Proverbs 22 –

“Do not rob the poor because he *is* poor,  
Nor oppress the afflicted at the gate;  
<sup>23</sup> For the Lord will plead their cause,  
And plunder the soul of those who plunder them.” Proverbs 22:22, 23

The word comes from a primitive root signifying to cover. Thus, it is an act of defrauding that is taking place. The Lord isn't affected by lack or by mistreatment. However, people are. In harming such people, it is as if one is harming Yehovah. Thus...

**<sup>9</sup>You are cursed with a curse,**

*bam'erah atem nearim* – “In the execration, you execrated.” It is the same word used in Malachi 2:2, *meerah*, an execration. It means an angry denouncement. It is not a verbal attack levied at someone. Rather, it is a word against a person, his livelihood, possessions, family, etc. In this case, it extends to the entire nation. They stand under the execration of Deuteronomy 28:20 because of their conduct under the law –

“The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me.”

Things will not go well for them...

**<sup>9 (con't)</sup> For you have robbed Me,  
Even this whole nation.**

Again, a participle is used: *v'othi atem qovim hagoy kulo* –

“And Me you defrauding,  
The nation – it all.”

The entire nation is being addressed. If it was just one person and the nation was righteous, the one would be punished for his offense. However, this was not the case. Rather, the entire nation was complicit in defrauding Yehovah. As before, being a partíciple, they had not only defrauded Him, but they continued to do so to that day. To remedy this, He will continue speaking...

*Give that tithe, and the Lord will bless you  
He will open up the windows of heaven  
Send me your money, and this, He will do  
I promise you abundance... times seven*

*Don't you realize that a tithe you must give?  
That's what the word says. Trust me on this  
If you want abundantly to live  
You will send it in, and not a percent shall you miss*

*How can you receive God's grace if you don't give?  
You must not understand what grace means at all  
My goodness! Is it by grace that you think you live?  
If that's what you think, you're headed for a fall*

*Give until it hurts, and then give a little more  
This is what you must do, even if you are poor*

## **II. Test Me in This (verses 10-12)**

**<sup>10</sup> Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,  
That there may be food in My house,**

The word tithe is singular, and the second clause contains a jussive: *haviu eth kal ha'maaser el beith haotsar vihi tereph b'veiti* –

**“Bring all the tithe unto house the depository,  
And there shall be fragment in My house.”**

The *otsar*, depository, is from the verb *atsar*, to store up or lay up. At times, it is used to describe the king's treasury. It is a place where things are deposited for a particular reason. Even the heavens are called the depository where the rains are stored.

In this case, it is the depository of the tithes for the Lord's house, as in Nehemiah 12:44, "And at the same time some were appointed over the rooms of the storehouse [*otsar*] for the offerings, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather into them from the fields of the cities the portions specified by the Law for the priests and Levites; for Judah rejoiced over the priests and Levites who ministered."

The use of the jussive, an implied command, highlights that bringing in the tithes fulfills meeting the needs required by the law. In other words, the second clause is not an explanation of the first clause. Rather, the clauses are parallel:

You shall bring in the tithes to the depository.  
(I have ordered that) there shall be a fragment in My house.

The word *tereph*, fragment, is from *taraph*, to tear or rend. As such, it is something torn and thus a fragment. A portion of the tithe is torn off from the whole tithe. The tithes of Israel are as follows:

- Ten percent is taken out each year as a dedication to the Lord.
- For two years, the tithe is eaten by the people in the presence of the Lord, as indicated in Deuteronomy 14.
- In the third year, the tithe is stored up for the purpose recorded in Deuteronomy 14 –

"At the end of *every* third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store *it* up within your gates. <sup>29</sup>And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who *are* within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do."

-Deuteronomy 14:28, 29

This is the fragment, the tearing off, of the tithe being referred to. In failing to bring in the tithes, the Levites, the priests, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow were being deprived. Because of this, it was as if the Lord Himself was being defrauded by the people.

Therefore, He is telling them to bring the whole tithe meant for Him to the depository along with the oblations required by the law. As for the oblations of verse 8, there were various things that were to be offered by the people, such as the first fruits, the annual

half-shekel, various offerings for the tabernacle/temple, portions of sacrifices, and so forth.

Each had its particular purpose, but those purposes could not be met if the people did not give them. Thus, they were under the execration. However, if they met their obligations...

<sup>10</sup> (con't) **And try Me now in this,"**  
**Says the Lord of hosts,**

*uvkhanuni na bazoth amar Y'hovah ts'vaoth –*

“‘And Me test in this.’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

The Lord is offering the people a test of His reliability, “If you do this, I will respond with this.” How faithful do the people believe the Lord to be? He is extending an offer to demonstrate what they may fail to understand or what they may question about His reliability. What do they have to lose?

Again, the words are spoken to the nation as a whole. If one person wasn't tithing but the rest of the nation was being faithful, this would not be stated. Instead, the nation would be responsible for handling the unwilling individual.

This is one of several fallacies of those who cite these verses from Malachi when speaking to people about their need to tithe to the church:

- The words are spoken to Israel under the law and no one else.
- The tithe referred to is the third-year tithe, not ten percent every year.
- The same people who constantly harp about tithing in the church never (no, never ever!) mention the oblations that are spoken of in the same passage – obviously because they do not apply to the church, nor could they ever be mandated in it. And yet, they are as integral to the words of the Lord to Israel as are the tithes!

The hypocrisy and dishonesty of using these verses from Malachi when speaking to the church is both astonishing and appalling. And yet many preachers do, thus promising individuals something that only applies to the nation of Israel under the law, which is...

<sup>10</sup> (con't) **"If I will not open for you the windows of heaven  
And pour out for you *such* blessing  
That *there will not be room enough to receive it.***

*im lo ephtakh lakhem eth aruboth ha'shamayim vahariqothi lakhem b'rakha ad beli  
day-*

"If not open to you windows the heavens,  
And emptied to you blessing until failure sufficiency."

As seen earlier, the windows of the heavens refers to the storehouse of the rains that water the land. It is from the rains that the land becomes fruitful and productive, causing crops to grow, grapes to become full and ripen, fruit trees to bear, and so forth.

Israel was an agrarian society. Opening the windows of the heavens is set in contrast to being execrated and receiving no rain. This is not speaking of becoming rich because one gives his tithe to the church. It refers to the land becoming fruitful for the nation to receive its promised increase.

The land would become so productive because the nation honored the Lord that the depository would not be able to hold all of the tithe (failure sufficiency). If there was that much from ten percent of what the people gave, it would mean that their ninety percent would be more than could be imagined for the people.

The nation would become an exporting nation. From there, they would build material wealth of other kinds. Eventually, it would again be like the time of Solomon's rule –

"And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon." 1 Kings 4:25

As a practical example of this precept, right from their own history, this is recorded in 2 Chronicles 31 –

"Moreover he commanded the people who dwelt in Jerusalem to contribute support for the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to the Law of the Lord." 2 Chronicles 31:4

"And Azariah the chief priest, from the house of Zadok, answered him and said, "Since *the people* began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we

have had enough to eat and have plenty left, for the Lord has blessed His people; and what is left *is* this great abundance.” 2 Chronicles 31:10

In performing according to His word, Yehovah next makes a further promise to the people...

**<sup>11</sup>“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes,  
So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground,**

Rather than a noun, devourer, it is a verb: *v’gaarti lakhem baokhel v’lo yashkhit lakhem eth peri haadamah* –

“And rebuked to you in ‘the eating,’  
And no ruins to you fruit the ground.”

The verbal participle preceded by the definite article, the eating, gives the sense of a lively and voracious foe, eating up all of the livelihood of the people. The words are reminiscent of Joel 1 where various locusts are said to have devoured the land.

Whether a locust, caterpillar, worm, aphid or whatever else could devour the fruit, the Lord would rebuke it and keep it from doing so. The words of this verse are the opposite of what was seen in Malachi 2:3 –

2:3 (to the priests) – Behold Me! Rebuking [*gaar*] to your “the seed,”

3:11 (to the nation) – And rebuked [*gaar*] to you in the eating,

The seed of the ground, reflected in the tithes to the priests, was rebuked by the Lord because of their faithless conduct. However, if they would rightly instruct the people, the people would then act appropriately, and the Lord would rebuke the means by which the seed was rebuked, meaning “the eating.” These things are based on the execration said prior to the rebuke –

2:2 (to the priests) “And sent in you the execration.

(And execrated your blessings.)

And also execrated it.”

3:9 (to the nation) In the execration, you execrated.

And Me you defrauding,

The nation – it all.

The Levites and priests were sent the execration by which their blessings were execrated. This was because the people were not providing the tithe to the priests and Levites according to the law. But that was because “the eating” was eating all the people’s efforts, and the heavens were withholding the rains.

The entire nation was failing to honor the Lord and misfortune came upon all because of it. There was a cycle from which the people could seemingly not get free because all were failing. However, the primary failure was that the law was not being upheld, first and foremost, by the priests and Levites, and then by the people who were not being rightly instructed by the priests and Levites.

Despite this, if the people would be willing to honor the Lord by upholding the law, He would favor them. He would rebuke “the eating” to not ruin the fruit of the ground...

**11 (con’t) Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,”  
Says the Lord of hosts;**

*v’lo t’shakel lakhem ha’gephen basadeh amar Y’hovah ts’vaoth –*

“‘And no miscarries to you the vine in the field,’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

The meaning is that each blossom would pollinate and bud into fruit, and each fruit would come to full maturity, thus the clusters of grapes would be full and abundant.

The vine produces grapes. They, in turn, produce juice, wine, raisins, and so forth. The people would receive the abundance of the blessings of the Lord through obedience to the system of tithing that was set up to ultimately glorify Him.

The widows, orphans, and strangers would be tended to, the stewards of the law would receive the Lord’s portion (meaning their wages from the tithes), and the Lord would be glorified through this harmoniously working machine set forth in the law.

By stepping back and looking at what is going on, one can see the pattern whereby God is glorified. However, sin in man makes this impossible beyond the most temporary of instances. And so, what man needs is grace from God’s intervention into this system in order to complete and fulfill what man cannot do.

The priests are the mediators. The Levites take the place of the firstborn of each family. The people comprise the nation. It is responsible to fulfill the requirements of the law in order to be pleasing to God. Each had failed, and each did so continuously.

The Lord is showing, through Malachi, that something else – something greater – is needed to restore the nation to God in the fullest sense of the word. That something is a Someone – Jesus.

He is the perfect Mediator, God's Firstborn, and the true Israel who strives with God to fulfill His perfect will through perfect obedience to the law set forth by Him. The lesson of Israel is that all of the promised blessings will only find their fullest realization through the coming of the Messiah.

Israel could only be a shadowy, failing image of what God expects of His people. But in Christ, the blessings of God can be poured out on mankind in a way that we cannot yet even imagine. Israel failed to see this and lost its way. At the same time, the Gentiles have embraced what God is doing through Jesus.

In Him is the hope of complete and eternal restoration with God. It will take many ills and woes for Israel to realize this and to finally accept Jesus' full, final, finished, and forever work.

As for Israel, the ideal is set forth, even if it is actually unattainable. But it is promised nonetheless...

<sup>12 (fin)</sup> **“And all nations will call you blessed,  
For you will be a delightful land,”  
Says the Lord of hosts.**

*v'ishru etkhem kal hagoyim ki tihyu atem erets khephets amar Y'hovah ts'vaoth –*

““And straightened you, all the nations,  
For become you land desirable.’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

The verb *ashar* means to be or go straight. In turn, that can signify to go forward, advance, etc. The sense is that the nations will look to Israel as the role model for right living, happiness, prosperity, etc. It is what America has been for some time, where everyone wants to emulate the lifestyle, culture, and so forth that America displays.

This is promised to Israel if they will simply heed the word of the Lord, do as He has instructed, and conform themselves to His will as a nation. In doing so, they, represented by the land (the pronoun is plural), will be desirable.

The words of this and the surrounding verses are like those of Zechariah 8 –

“For the seed *shall be* prosperous,  
The vine shall give its fruit,  
The ground shall give her increase,  
And the heavens shall give their dew—  
I will cause the remnant of this people  
To possess all these.  
<sup>13</sup> And it shall come to pass  
*That* just as you were a curse among the nations,  
O house of Judah and house of Israel,  
So I will save you, and you shall be a blessing.  
Do not fear,  
Let your hands be strong.” Zechariah 8:12, 13

As for these promises, they always came about when the people did as the Lord said, but Israel never continued. Like America today, prosperity leads to lethargy towards the Lord, greediness in the hearts of the people, impatience with those less fortunate, and so forth.

Israel continued on her walk toward the coming of Christ, but she stumbled as she went. When He came, He offered a new direction. Instead of blessings turning into curses, He offered a state of abundance and joy that could never be taken from them again.

However, the gospels and Acts reveal how the nation turned from Him, refused the Lord’s offer of peace through Him, and shunned the New Covenant that came through His shed blood. In rejecting this offer, they remain bound to the Mosaic Law, and they stand condemned before the infinitely holy Creator God.

This doesn’t mean, however, that the offer of the New Covenant has been retracted from them. Paul clearly and carefully explains this in Romans 11, which tells us that at a certain point, when the fullness of the Gentiles has been brought into His salvation, Israel’s blindness will end.

This is not a misunderstanding of Paul's words. Rather, it is exactly what both testaments of Scripture proclaim. Israel was given the law to be God's witness to the world that the law is merely a tool, a steppingstone to the fulness of what God is doing.

Israel's failures, each one of them, witness to their need for Jesus. A success, if it is temporary, is only a temporary success. It is not a permanent fix. With Jesus, the fix is permanent. The temporary successes of Israel are comingled with their constant failures.

This record of their history, then, is a tool of instruction to lead man to see his need for Jesus. Paul explains this in Galatians 3. We will see that as we close out today. Anyone who can't see the utter futility of life under the law is not looking very hard.

Malachi is summing up what was seen right on the first pages of man's recorded history. Man was given law, man failed at keeping the law, and man was exiled from God. Israel was given the law, Israel failed to keep the law, and Israel has been exiled from God.

But with Jesus, that is all changed. He was born under the law, He kept the law without failing in the slightest precept, and He was therefore brought close to God, serving at His right hand. Jesus! It is all about Jesus. If you are looking for the desirable land that God offers, you must come through Him to obtain it.

There is no end-around or work-around. Rather, Jesus has done the work. He is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Again, He has done the work! He has fulfilled the roles set forth in Israel. Jesus alone has prevailed. So come to God through Him and that wonderful, desirable land you long for will be waiting. All hail the name of Jesus!

**Closing Verse:** *Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. <sup>22</sup> But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. <sup>23</sup> But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. <sup>24</sup> Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. Galatians 3:21-25*

**Next Week:** Malachi 3:13-18 *When you do right, cast aside all your fears...* (And Harkens, Yehovah, and Hears) (9<sup>th</sup> Malachi Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He has sent His Messenger to carry the good news to all people. Jesus! God promised, and God delivered. The time of the law has ended, and grace has come. Praise God for Jesus.

### **Malachi 3:7-12 (CG)**

<sup>7</sup>To from days your fathers,  
Veered from My enactments,  
And not guarded.  
Return unto Me,  
And I am returning unto you.’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”  
““And said, “In what returning?””  
<sup>8</sup>““Defrauds man God?  
For you defrauding Me.  
And say, “In what defrauding You?”  
‘The tithe and the oblation.  
<sup>9</sup>In the execration, you execrated.  
And Me you defrauding,  
The nation – it all.  
<sup>10</sup>Bring all the tithe unto house the depository,  
And there shall be fragment in My house.  
And Me test in this.’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”  
““If not open to you windows the heavens,  
And emptied to you blessing until failure sufficiency.  
<sup>11</sup>And rebuked to you in ‘the eating,’  
And no ruins to you fruit the ground,  
And no miscarries to you the vine in the field,’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”  
<sup>12</sup>““And straightened you, all the nations,  
For become you land desirable.’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

### **Malachi 3:7-12 (NKJV)**

Yet from the days of your fathers  
You have gone away from My ordinances

And have not kept *them*.  
Return to Me, and I will return to you,”  
Says the LORD of hosts.  
“But you said,  
‘In what way shall we return?’  
<sup>8</sup>“Will a man rob God?  
Yet you have robbed Me!  
But you say,  
‘In what way have we robbed You?’  
In tithes and offerings.  
<sup>9</sup>You are cursed with a curse,  
For you have robbed Me,  
*Even* this whole nation.  
<sup>10</sup>Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,  
That there may be food in My house,  
And try Me now in this,”  
Says the Lord of hosts,  
“If I will not open for you the windows of heaven  
And pour out for you *such* blessing  
That *there will not be room enough to receive it*.  
<sup>11</sup>“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes,  
So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground,  
Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,”  
Says the Lord of hosts;  
<sup>12</sup>“And all nations will call you blessed,  
For you will be a delightful land,”  
Says the Lord of hosts.

## **MALACHI 3:13-18 (AND HEARKENS, YEHOVAH, AND HEARS)**

The Lord is direct with Israel in His words through Malachi. He is clear that their attitude as a nation and a people is completely unacceptable. There is no way to sugarcoat this, and it would be pointless to attempt to do so.

Nothing has changed in the world today, so I don't attempt to sugarcoat my words about them either. When they do well in the world, I compliment them. Because the Lord has called them back to the land He promised them, I support them in light of that.

And yet, concerning their demeanor, their attitude towards the Lord, and their arrogance in their national and cultural thinking, I don't hold back how I feel. There is nothing antisemitic about this. If one generally evaluates the Jewish people based on their compliance with Scripture, they would be given an F-.

Overall, their humility towards God is lacking, their morals aren't just in the john, they were flushed eons ago, and their generally superior attitude is completely unjustified. Yes, this sounds harsh, but only until we realize that Israel is merely a microcosm of the larger world.

Can anyone say any differently about most of the politicians in the world? Or about most of those who run big tech or other big corporations? Are there not feelings of superiority welling up in nations, cultures, religions, and even denominations within Christianity?

**Text Verse:** *"And the Lord said to Moses, 'Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.'" Exodus 32:33*

The faults of Israel and the Jewish people are different from the rest for one important reason: they covenanted with God. There is a benefit to this. Despite their incredibly horrible conduct before the Lord, He has promised that they will forever remain as a people before Him.

That's a good thing, because were it not for this, the record of their conduct as found in Scripture would have merited utter annihilation eons ago. On the other hand, there are definite drawbacks to their relationship with the Lord when they fail to honor Him as they agreed.

Those drawbacks are openly and clearly recorded in the Pentateuch, especially Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. When they came about, they were obviously self-inflicted wounds, but this doesn't make it any less tragic.

For example, and let's be honest, from a biblical perspective – meaning taking things in context and literally – would the Holocaust have happened if the Jews were right with the Lord? Would the pogroms have happened? Would they have been exiled? The answers are obvious, even if they (and many others) will not admit it.

Israel's Holocaust Museum, the Yad Vashem, as sad and horrific as it is to visit, is a testimony to Israel's unfaithfulness to the Lord. Whether saying that disturbs you or makes you angry doesn't change the fact that it is so. The book of Zechariah, which will be quoted from today, along with so many other passages of Scripture, clearly and unambiguously reveals this to us.

But again, Israel as a nation, and the Jewish people as a cultural entity, are merely a microcosm of the rest of the world. When we point our fingers at Israel and blame them for the world's problems, we are taking a myopic view of things.

The guilt is everywhere, and it is increasing daily. This is for one main reason: the rejection of Jesus Christ. Israel was exiled and has faced many woes. The world will be joining them in the tribulation period, the time of Jacob's trouble, for exactly this.

Remember this as we continue through and complete Chapter 3 of Malachi. When I pick on some of the Jews of the world, highlighting them for their ways, it is because they are the focus of the words of Malachi. But these words are a part of the Bible. Thus, they are instructive for all people.

This is a certain truth that is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. Built Doing Wickedness (verses 13-15)**

**<sup>13</sup> "Your words have been harsh against Me,"  
Says the Lord,**

Apart from Malachi 1:2 and 1:13, the wording is unique in the book: *khazqu alay divrekhem amar Y'hovah* –

“Seized upon Me your words,’ said Yehovah.”

In Malachi 1:2, it says, *amar Y’hovah*, “said Yehovah.” That is repeated in 1:13 and in this verse. Every other instance where a proclamation is made by Yehovah, it says, *amar Y’hovah ts’vaoth* – “said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

Rather than a proclamation from the Lord of Hosts who wields all the power of His many legions of angels, it is a pained cry from the self-existent Lord who called Israel to be His own special possession. Because of this, one can see the personal nature of the words –

1:2 – “I loved you, said Yehovah.’  
And said, ‘In how loved us?’”

1:13 – And brought stripped, and the lame, and the rubbing.  
And brought the present!  
Accept it from your hand?  
Said Yehovah.”

3:1 – “Seized upon Me your words,’ said Yehovah.  
And said, ‘What spoken upon You?’”

As such, one can see that the Lord is wounded by the event being conveyed. He loved Israel and yet their words seized Him. It was as if they violently grabbed Him with them, painfully stating things that then marred the relationship between them.

The words of the NKJV, “Your words have been harsh against Me,” are somewhat of a paraphrase, but they do get the intent across. Yehovah, who reads the hearts and minds of His people, and who is aware of every word they speak, is personally affected by the discourse He hears and the intent behind the spoken words...

<sup>13</sup> (con’t) **“Yet you say,  
‘What have we spoken against You?’**

*vaamartem mah nidbarnu alekha* – “And said, ‘What spoken upon You?’” In this, one can see that Israel understood the intent of what Yehovah said –

“Seized upon Me your words,’ said Yehovah.”  
“And said, ‘What spoken upon You?’”

The words seized and spoken are in apposition. Israel questions what they have said that so seized Yehovah. And, as has been the case throughout the book, they ask it as if they have no idea what He is talking about, “Wha.. What? Spoken upon You? What are You talking about?”

The main issue here is essentially a denial of the omniscience of Yehovah. The form of the verb spoken, *nidbarnu*, is what is known as a *niphal*. It is either a passive or reflexive voice. Thus, these weren't words spoken to the Lord but about Him, either muttering to themselves or among one another.

The Lord is telling them that He hears and is fully aware of what they are saying. They fail to recognize this quality and go about muttering their complaints, not considering that He is aware of every word that passes over their lips.

If one considers and takes to heart the tenth commandment, “You shall not covet,” he understands this quality and ability of the Lord. Coveting is something that occurs inside a person. It may lead to outward words or actions, but the state of coveting is only truly known to the individual and God.

In stating, “You shall not covet,” the Lord was letting them know that He was aware of their inner desires. Paul shows that this is true in Romans 7 –

“What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘You shall not covet.’<sup>8</sup> But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead.<sup>9</sup> I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.<sup>10</sup> And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death.<sup>11</sup> For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*.<sup>12</sup> Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.” Romans 7:7-12

How can sin be imputed for an internal act, coveting, unless the Lord is aware of the act, meaning the evil desire, which then leads to other sins? The same is true here in Malachi concerning the words uttered in private that seized upon the Lord. Understanding this, the Lord, through Malachi, continues with his proclamation...

**<sup>14</sup> You have said,  
‘It is useless to serve God;**

*amartem shav avod elohim* – “Said, ‘Emptiness serving God.’” The word is *shav*, coming from *sho*, desolation. Thus, it is a state of nothingness or emptiness. This tells us that the words referred to in the previous verse are not unlike those of verse 2:17 –

“Gasped, Yehovah in your words,  
And said, ‘In what gasped?’  
In your saying, ‘All doing evil good in eye Yehovah.  
And in them He inclined.’  
Or, ‘Where God the verdict?’”

The actions of the people are equated to their words as if their actions are openly proclaiming the intent of the heart. The word “words” in verse 2:17 is not to be taken literally. The words being referred to are not specifically the words spoken by the people, but what was spoken by them leads to the thought being expressed by Yehovah.

The people may have said, “Why are we wasting our time with offerings, sacrifices, and tithes? The nations around us don’t do these things and they are all prospering. We are no worse off when we don’t do these things, and we are no better off when we do them.” This type of attitude is equated to “Emptiness serving God.”

This demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of Israel’s position before the Lord. They, as a nation and a people, agreed to the conditions of the Mosaic covenant. Throughout the years, they voluntarily recommitted to it time and time again.

The requirement to serve God as a nation was not optional. Their fathers had entered into the covenant for them, and it was binding upon them. What seemed to them to be emptiness (meaning pointless) was still required, whether they liked it or not.

To understand, one might consider the Jews in America today. They are prosperous, famous, intellectuals, movie stars, etc. They might say, “Why do I need to read the Bible? Why do I need to know about the conditions set forth in the law? Why do I need to worship Yehovah? I am rich, famous, and have power and influence!”

That attitude is then returned to them with the words, “Said (pl.), ‘Emptiness serving God.’” The attitude of the Jews of America is that they are already OK with the Lord. They have everything anyone could ask for. Tossing Him into their everyday lives is completely unnecessary because they are already full of all they could ever want.

Now take the opposite circumstances. The Jews of Nazi Germany considered themselves the people of the Lord. And yet, they were being exterminated by the government of the nation in which they lived. They might say, “Why should we serve the Lord? We are His people, and yet we are being led as sheep to the slaughter. What good has He ever been to us?” This is what the people of Jeremiah’s time essentially said.

Again, it reflects a complete misunderstanding of who they are in relation to the Lord. It is not their choice. That decision was made for them in the past. They are under obligation to serve Yehovah. Until they come to Jesus, that means living and dying by the Mosaic Law.

But even more, the words of the Lord, which reflect the sentiment of the people, say, “Emptiness serving God.” Yehovah is God, but the people have distanced themselves from this truth, trying to shake off their calling altogether. They think not only is it pointless to serve Yehovah (who is God), but it is pointless to serve God in general.

It is the atheistic attitude that permeates the Jewish society to this day. Even when they proclaim that they are the people of the Lord and the chosen of God, their actions deny that they accept either.

This isn’t just a diatribe against Israel. Rather, the same attitude permeates other religions and cultures as well. During the elections, Kamala Harris claimed to be a Christian and allowed people to equate her to Jesus or a “spiritual” Christian in various ways.

And yet, when she openly spoke about abortion, someone in the crowd called out, “Jesus is Lord.” Her response spoke volumes about her supposed “faith.” She belittled him, saying that he was “at the wrong rally” further demeaning him by saying, “No, I think you meant to go to the smaller one down the street.”

This is the arrogant and vile attitude on display in Malachi and which Isaiah called out. Jesus cited it, saying –

“These people draw near to Me with their mouth,  
And honor Me with *their* lips,  
But their heart is far from Me.” Matthew 15:8

One can see this attitude in the continued words...

<sup>14</sup> (con't) **What profit *is it* that we have kept His ordinance,  
And that we have walked as mourners  
Before the Lord of hosts?**

*u-mah betsa ki shamaru mishmarto v'ki halakhnu q'doranith mipne Y'hovah ts'vaoth –*

“And what gain, for kept His watch,  
And for walked blackishly in faces Yehovah Sabaoth.”

Here is a word found only this one time in Scripture, the adverb *qedoranith*. It comes from *qadar*, to be blackish. Thus, it literally means blackishly. Figuratively, it gives the sense of mourning.

Though using a different word translated as “mourning,” the sense is understood from Zechariah 7 –

“Then the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying, <sup>5</sup> ‘Say to all the people of the land, and to the priests: “When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh *months* during those seventy years, did you really fast for Me—for Me? <sup>6</sup> When you eat and when you drink, do you not eat and drink *for yourselves?* <sup>7</sup> *Should you not have obeyed* the words which the Lord proclaimed through the former prophets when Jerusalem and the cities around it were inhabited and prosperous, and the South and the Lowland were inhabited?’”

-Zechariah 7:4-7

The Lord charges the people with their words which were reflective of their conduct. “Why are we bothering with considering the Lord, keeping His watch, and mourning before Him? Nothing changes regardless of what we do.”

Here, however, they say *Y'hovah ts'vaoth*, Yehovah Sabaoth. They have demonstrated an atheistic attitude, essentially mocking Him. “If He is the Lord of Hosts, why isn't He using His hosts to exalt us as He promised?”

Yehovah is supposedly God. He supposedly has all of heaven's power at His disposal, and yet, they believe doing things they are supposed to do is no different than if they don't do them. Never mind that Israel almost never did what they were supposed to do. Because of this attitude...

<sup>15</sup> **So now we call the proud blessed,**

The words are emphatic: *v'atah anakhnu m'ashrim zedim* – “And now, we straighten arrogant.” In verses 3:10-12, the Lord promised the people that if they did what was right, He would bless them even to overflowing. In 3:12, it says, “And straightened you, all the nations.”

In essence, “All nations will call you blessed.” However, the people essentially turn around and say, “Oh yeah! Serving You counts for nothing. There is no benefit in it. Instead of the nations calling us blessed, we call the arrogant blessed.”

The word translated as arrogant, *zed*, comes from *zud*, to boil. Thus, “Those who are proud and boastful are the ones who get ahead! Why should we serve Yehovah blackishly when we can be proud, boastful, and arrogant while living comfortably?” This is the attitude that the people are displaying and which continues today. This is because...

<sup>15</sup> (con't) **For those who do wickedness are raised up;  
They even tempt God and go free.”**

*gam nivnu ose rishah gam bakhanu elohim vayimaletu –*

“Also built doing wickedness,  
Also tested God and escape.”

The clauses are parallel and highlighted by the word *gam*, also. Thus, they build upon the first clause. The arrogant are considered straightened (blessed). Also those who are doing wickedness are built up, and also those who test God escape from any judgment.

This is the attitude of the Jewish people. Mel Brooks is a good example. Even if his movies are funny, they show a disregard for the Lord and His word. Much of what he put forth is simply wickedness, and yet he has been abundantly built up in fame and fortune.

And more, at times his films actually test God in a mocking, dismissive, or belligerent attitude. Despite this, he has had a long life (98 years so far) with no harm or trouble. People see this type of thing going on in the world and naturally question God's ways, dismiss the Lord, neglect the covenant, and go about pursuing the same perverse life that they see as rewarding.

Now, after all of this chiding by the Lord, if we go back to Malachi 1, the reason for speaking against Edom ought to be obvious. Israel was (and remains to this day) intolerable before the Lord. The only thing that set them apart and which has spared them for millennia has been God's covenant affection toward them –

A lifting - word Yehovah unto Israel in hand Malachi.

<sup>2</sup>“‘I loved you said Yehovah.’

And said, ‘In how loved us?’

‘Not brother, Esau, to Jacob?’

Utterance Yehovah.

‘And I love Jacob.

<sup>3</sup>And Esau, I hate,

And set his mountains – a devastation.

And his inheritance to jackals wilderness.”

<sup>4</sup>“For says Edom,

‘Demolished! And return, and build wastelands.’”

“Thus said Yehovah Sabaoth:

‘They build, and I raze.

And called to them Territory Wickedness,

And “the people whom frothed Yehovah until vanishment.”

<sup>5</sup>And your eyes see,

And you say,

‘Magnified, Yehovah, from upon to border Israel.’”

Whereas Edom was destroyed and lost as a nation, Israel has continued, but only because of the Lord's faithfulness to them.

*Look at how much money he has!  
Despite all the rotten things he does  
He has cars and boats and all that jazz  
And he always gets a pass when arrested by the Fuzz*

*Everyone knows he is a total crook  
And yet he prospers everywhere he turns  
Obviously, God doesn't care or look  
From him, the rest of society notices and learns*

*Where is the God who judges us?  
It is useless to serve Him, so we can tell*

*Why should we fear rejecting Jesus?  
When doing wrong, everything stays swell*

## **II. Between Just to Wicked (verses 16-18)**

Despite the overall conduct of Israel, there are those who actually care about their relationship with the Lord. They are the faithful remnant noted throughout the Bible. Paul refers to them in Romans 11 –

“I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup> God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, <sup>3</sup> ‘Lord, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life? <sup>4</sup> But what does the divine response say to him? ‘I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’ <sup>5</sup> Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. <sup>6</sup> And if by grace, then *it is* no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if *it is* of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.”

-Romans 11:1-6

Of this faithful remnant at Malachi’s time, the words next convey three identifying factors concerning them...

**<sup>16</sup> Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another,**

*az nidbru yire Y’hovah ish eth reehu* – “Then spoke, ‘fear Yehovah,’ man to his friend.” There are two identifying characteristics stated here. One is there are those who fear the Lord. As it says elsewhere –

“And to man He said,  
‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that *is* wisdom,  
And to depart from evil *is* understanding.” Job 28:28

Second, those who fear the Lord speak about their fear of Him. They don’t just keep quiet, but rather, they share their hope in Him.

As for the first word, *az*, it signifies “at that time.” In other words, what is said here is the exception within Israel. The words of the nation as a whole seized upon the Lord.

However, at that time, there were those within the nation who feared the Lord and each spoke to his friend from that perspective.

As for the meaning, it may be as the NKJV translates it. There are those in Israel who have a fear of Yehovah. They speak to their friends who also fear Yehovah. Or it could mean that those who had a fear of Him spoke, “man to his friend,” in order to convince his friend to fear Him.

Either way, there are those who fear the Lord and who speak about Him in a right, positive manner. This is not unknown or ignored by Him. Rather...

**16 (con't) And the Lord listened and heard *them*;**

Rather: *vayaqshev Y'hovah vayishma* – “And hearkens, Yehovah, and hears.” The inserted word “them” may or may not be correct based on what was said before. It may be that the previous clause refers to discourse between two parties. Or it may be individuals who fear the Lord and tell others to do so as well.

Either way, the Lord hears their words and hearkens to them. In His hearkening and hearing...

**16 (con't) So a book of remembrance was written before Him**

*vayikathev sepher zikaron l'phanav* – “And writes book remembrance to His faces.” The words here are written for our benefit, not the Lord's. There is nothing He needs to remember, nor is there anything He either doesn't know or could forget.

As such both the words “remembrance” and “book” are to be taken figuratively or anthropomorphically. This is true in other such references to books referred to in the Bible in this manner.

It is true that God could have a book written up with all the deeds of man in it, but the idea of a “book” here is more likely just a way of saying that God, who knows and remembers all things, will remind us of every good or evil deed we have done.

However He will accomplish this, the remembrance of those who fear Him and speak rightly concerning Him will come to pass. With that understood, the thought is confirmed with the words...

<sup>16</sup> (con't) **For those who fear the Lord  
And who meditate on His name.**

*l'yire Y'hovah ul'khoshve sh'mo –*

“To ‘fear Yehovah,’  
And reckoning His name.”

The first identifying characteristic is restated here as those who fear Yehovah. That is then followed by a third characteristic, those who are reckoning His name. The use of the participle, reckoning, shows the ongoing nature of their conduct.

They don't just reckon Him and move on, but they continue to think about Him. As for the word translated as reckon, *khashav*, this is its only use in Malachi. It signifies to plait or interpenetrate. Such a person weaves the knowledge of God into his thoughts and actions.

Thus, the use of this word is parallel to but also expands upon, the thought of those who “spoke” in the first clause. Their speaking about the Lord is based on their fear of Him which is reckoned by them. One can speak without thinking, but these fear, consider, and then speak. Of them...

<sup>17</sup> **“They shall be Mine,” says the Lord of hosts,**

Rather, the verb is in the perfect aspect: *v'hayu li amar Yehovah ts'vaoth –*

“‘And became to Me,’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

It is already done, not in the future, even if the benefit is future. That is not unlike our salvation. In God's eyes, it is done. We are His, even if we are still here living in sin-sacks and offending Him daily. The day we called on Jesus, we became the Lord's.

What we possess is not a dubious claim that can be lost through negligence or faithlessness. Rather, we have assurance, even when we might not feel assured. Such is true with these people. Those fearing Yehovah stood before Him justified...

<sup>17</sup> (con't) **“On the day that I make them My jewels.**

Rather: *layom asher ani oseh s'gulah* – “To the day which I making possession.” Those who feared the Lord are remembered by Him. They had become His, and this was for a set time and purpose. The day is one determined by Him but which will come to pass. The purpose is that they will be a part of His possession.

The word is *s'gullah*. It is from the passive participle of an unused root meaning to shut up. One might shut up wealth, treasure, jewels, etc. The NKJV dubiously paraphrases the thought with “My jewels,” but it simply signifies a possession.

The thought here is in line with that of 1 John 5:19, 20. There he says –

“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway* of the wicked one. <sup>20</sup> And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

In other words, because of Jesus, we move from the power of the devil to that of Christ. This is true with the Old Testament saints, even though Christ had not yet come. They lived by faith in the Lord and in the anticipation of the Messiah. Today, we live by faith in the Messiah who has come.

Those who became the Lord's before Christ's coming will be a part of His possession that is to be expressed in the millennial reign of Christ. Those who are Christ's after His coming will be taken at the rapture to be a part of His eternal heavenly kingdom. As for those Old Testament saints...

<sup>17</sup> (con't) **And I will spare them  
As a man spares his own son who serves him.”**

*v'khamalti alehem kaasher yakhmol ish al b'no ha'oved oto* –

“And commiserate upon them,  
According to which commiserates man upon his son – the ‘serving him.’”

The word is *khamal*, to commiserate. As such, it is quite often rendered to spare or have pity on. In this case, because of the additional word *al*, upon, saying commiserate is appropriate. But more, He adds in the thought that this will be as a man commiserates upon the son who faithfully serves him.

It is a wonderful set of words. The relationship between the Lord and those who are faithful to Him is as close as that of a father and his beloved and faithful son, who appropriately and devotedly serves him.

This tells us that the Lord will have sympathy upon the faithful of Israel, even while He is judging the unfaithful and sending them to their just punishment. That overall thought is then expressed in the final verse of the chapter...

**18 Then you shall again discern  
Between the righteous and the wicked,**

*v'shavtem urithem ben tsadiq l'rasha* – “And returned and seen between just to wicked.” The thought here speaks of the nation that will be realized in the millennium. In other words, those who have been spoken of will be commiserated upon by the Lord.

They will be raised before the millennium. They will be a part of the generation who is returned to Israel, having understood the fullness of the redemptive narrative as it has played out in the nation of Israel. This is seen in two separate thoughts.

The first is the state of the Old Testament saints before Christ's coming, such as Daniel –

“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,  
Some to everlasting life,  
Some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.” Daniel 12:2

These will be a part of what is known as “the first resurrection” in Revelation 20, a resurrection that will include those who were beheaded for Jesus during the tribulation and who did not receive the mark of the beast.

Along with them, there will be those of Israel who survive through the tribulation and who will be alive at the second coming of Christ. They are detailed in Zechariah 12:10-14.

Together, they will comprise those who enter the millennium and receive the promises made throughout the Old Testament to the nation of Israel. They will at that time discern “between just to wicked,” meaning they will understand how the Lord deals with His people from the just even to the wicked. That thought is taken and further explained with our final words of the day...

**18 (fin) Between one who serves God  
And one who does not serve Him.**

*ben oved elohim laasher lo avado* – “Between serving God to whom not Him served.” The thought takes us right back to verse 3:14 where it said, “Emptiness serving God.” Those who found serving God pointless will see the error of their thinking.

They think that life is about them, their prosperity, their contentment, and so forth. That is not the point of serving God. Those who faithfully serve Him are found in almost every condition imaginable.

Some were wealthy and attained a good old age, like Abraham. Some were called to lives without wives and children and who suffered constantly at the hands of the people, like Jeremiah. David became king and led the nation. Others lived lives of almost total obscurity.

Serving God is not at all about us and our happiness. It is an attitude that comes from within and transcends whatever situation we find ourselves in. David was a man after God’s own heart while reigning as king. Other kings completely ignored the Lord, boasted against Him, walked away from Him, etc.

The people in the millennium will return and discern who is righteous and who is wicked. They will understand what faithful service to the Lord means, and they will be His people in that day. Chapter 4 will further explain the difference between such people.

For now, it is to be remembered by each of us that God is not inattentive to our lives and actions. If He is God, He knows everything about us, everything we think, and every action we take.

This isn’t intended to scare us. Rather, it is simply a truth that exists. What should scare us is when we are unprepared for the inevitable meeting we will have with Him. If we are wise, we will heed the words of Scripture and have a reverent fear of the Lord.

Today, that no longer means what it did during Malachi’s time. The Lord spoke to Israel as a nation. The nation as a whole turned and talked back to the Lord, denied their guilt, rejected His ways, and said that it was pointless to serve Him as they had been directed.

There were some who took the words of Malachi to heart and stood against this national trend by remaining faithful to their God according to the plan set forth by Moses. With the coming of Christ, a new direction was set. The people were no longer to cling to Moses, but to Jesus, of whom Moses wrote.

As a nation, they failed at this. But as Paul explained, a remnant of Israel has remained faithful to God through their allegiance to Jesus. And more, the Gentiles have come to Jesus in droves. This is what pleases God, faith in what He has done through Jesus.

Despite our failings, that God sees and knows in minute detail, if we have called on Christ in faith, we will be remembered on that great day when He calls, and we will be taken to glory. No promise of God will fail, and no person who has lived since Adam will be overlooked in His judgment of humanity.

Be prepared for that day by being set apart to Him through the precious blood of Christ. The tithes and offerings of the past find their fulfillment in Him. Those things, and indeed all of the precepts of the Law of Moses, were simply an instructional tool to lead Israel to understand their need for Christ.

Their failure to grasp this in no way negates that Scripture, which tells us of Israel, is intended for the same purpose: to lead us to Jesus. Let us not get bogged down in law observance but rather rightly understand what God is doing in and through Israel as detailed in His word. May it be so, to the glory of God who gave us Jesus.

**Closing Verse:** *Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, <sup>15</sup> to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." Jude 1:14, 15*

**Next Week:** Malachi 4:1-6 *Can't you just hear the drummers drumming* (The Day is Coming) (10<sup>th</sup> and final Malachi Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He has sent His Messenger to carry the good news to all people. Jesus! God promised, and God delivered. The time of the law has ended, and grace has come. Praise God for Jesus.

### Malachi 3:13-18 (CG)

<sup>13</sup> “‘Seized upon Me your words,’ said Yehovah.

And said, ‘What spoken upon You?’

<sup>14</sup> Said, ‘Emptiness serving God,

And what gain, for kept His watch,

And for walked blackishly in faces Yehovah Sabaoth.

<sup>15</sup> And now, we straighten arrogant,

Also built doing wickedness,

Also tested God and escape.’”

<sup>16</sup> Then spoke, ‘fear Yehovah,’ man to his friend,

And hearkens, Yehovah, and hears,

And writes book remembrance to His faces,

To ‘fear Yehovah,’

And reckoning His name.

<sup>17</sup> “‘And became to Me,’

Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

“To the day which I making possession.

And commiserate upon them,

According to which commiserates man upon his son – the ‘serving him.’

<sup>18</sup> And returned and seen between just to wicked,

Between serving God to whom not Him served.”

### Malachi 3:13-18 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> “Your words have been harsh against Me,”

Says the Lord,

“Yet you say,

‘What have we spoken against You?’

<sup>14</sup> You have said,

‘It is useless to serve God;

What profit *is it* that we have kept His ordinance,

And that we have walked as mourners

Before the Lord of hosts?

<sup>15</sup> So now we call the proud blessed,

For those who do wickedness are raised up;

They even tempt God and go free.’ ”

<sup>16</sup> Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another,

And the Lord listened and heard *them*;

So a book of remembrance was written before Him  
For those who fear the Lord  
And who meditate on His name.

<sup>17</sup> “They shall be Mine,” says the Lord of hosts,  
“On the day that I make them My jewels.

And I will spare them

As a man spares his own son who serves him.”

<sup>18</sup> Then you shall again discern

Between the righteous and the wicked,

Between one who serves God

And one who does not serve Him.

## **MALACHI 4:1-6 (THE DAY IS COMING)**

The book of Malachi and the Old Testament canon are complete with these verses in Malachi. Right at the very beginning, God set forth a plan that has been slowly and methodically worked out in the course of human history.

Much of it is centered on Israel. We might ask, “Why Israel?” But the same question would be asked if He had chosen the Mongolians or the Peruvians. He chose Israel, and that is how it is. He knew what would work and why.

He knew what languages would convey His intentions for His word. He knew what family, genealogy, nation, and location would bring about His purposes in the ways He determined.

His word shows that He purposefully intervened at various times in order to ensure things continued on as they should. Everything about the word shows careful attention to every detail.

One example from Israel’s history, which is alluded to in today’s verses, is cited by Jesus –

**Text Verse:** *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.’<sup>57</sup> Then the Jews said to Him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?’<sup>58</sup> Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.’” John 8:56-58*

Abraham rejoiced at the good news of God in Christ. The only way that was possible was for God to reveal it to him in some way. Paul explains that in the book of Galatians. But the Jews who argued with Jesus should have clued into what He was saying because they were told to remember the Law of Moses.

The story of Abraham is a part of the Law of Moses. If they had been less arrogant and more willing to study and accept God’s word, they would not have rejected Jesus’ words. They would have understood, believed, and been saved.

And the same is true with us today. Our understanding of God, what He is doing, and how it affects us is found in only one place, His word. It may be explained in ten thousand commentaries and sermons, but it is only found in the Bible.

Unless we actually read the word and check what we are taught, we can have no idea if what we have learned is correct or not. The leaders of Israel instructed the people in all sorts of things, but they often had little to do with the word.

Those instructing were the ones Jesus most vehemently argued against. Do you suppose the same would be true today? If He showed up right now, how would He evaluate the leaders of churches? He would do so in accordance with His word.

Let us remember this, both as a congregation and individually. We must be careful how we conduct our affairs in relation to it. The process of salvation is explained in the word. Many churches get that right, but their doctrine beyond that may be highly questionable.

People being saved doesn't equate to receiving rewards for how their lives were lived in their state of salvation. And for those who fail to come to Jesus, only bad times can be expected. These are certain truths that are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. Root and Branch (verses 1-3)**

<sup>1</sup> **“For behold, the day is coming,**

*ki hineh hayom ba* – “For behold! The day coming.”

The day referred to here corresponds to what was said in Malachi 3:2 –

“But who can endure the day of His coming?  
And who can stand when He appears?”

But what exactly is this day? Scholars vary in their interpretation of its meaning. Some place it at the time of Christ's coming and the nation's rejection of Him. Thus, the destruction of Jerusalem by fire and the exile of the people. Others see it as the day when Christ returns in fiery judgment, as in 2 Peter 3:7 –

“But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

If this is the same day referred to in Malachi 3, one might assume the day is in Jesus' first coming. Malachi 3:1 begins with the thought of the Lord sending His messenger before Jesus. All three of the synoptic gospels cite Jesus saying this was John the Baptist –

“As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup> But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft *clothing* are in kings’ houses. <sup>9</sup> But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup> For this is *he* of whom it is written: “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.”” Matthew 11:7-10

However, verse 5 will say that this day is when the Lord will send Elijah the prophet, a man who did not die but who was taken directly to heaven in a whirlwind, as recorded in 2 Kings 2.

To further complicate the matter, Jesus directly equated John the Baptist to Elijah in His continued words of Matthew 11 –

“Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. <sup>12</sup> And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. <sup>13</sup> For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. <sup>14</sup> And if you are willing to receive *it*, he is Elijah who is to come. <sup>15</sup> He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” Matthew 11:11-15

The answer to the meaning of “the day” comes from understanding God’s irrevocable faithfulness to His unfaithful people, Israel. He has promised that He will bring them into the New Covenant. As a nation, that has not yet happened.

And so, the day is not one particular time, nor is it one particular event. It is a succession of events that comprise the day of the Lord’s judgment spanning the history of Israel from Christ’s first advent until His second.

John the Baptist came as the promised Elijah and the nation did not receive Jesus. In the future, Elijah himself will return to testify once again to the nation. This will be seen as we continue. This succession of events that comprise “the day” will be...

<sup>1</sup> (con’t) **Burning like an oven,**

*boer katanur* – “Burning according to the firepot.” In Malachi 3:2, it said, “For He according to fire – smelting.” Christ was compared to the fire. Now, the day of Christ is compared to the firepot in which the smelting occurs.

Fire in the open burns with great heat, but the firepot is used to increase the heat. In such heat, everything impure is burned away or separated, such as the slag separating from the pure metal. Nobody can doubt that this type of process was used to purge Israel after Christ’s ascension.

In fact, preterists cling to the fact that the judgment upon Israel occurred at that time in the destruction of the temple and the exile of the people. To them, that was the end of Israel in the redemption narrative. And yet, this causes a dilemma because Israel exists today not only as a people but in the land promised to the people.

Preterists and replacement theologians dismiss this fact as an aberration, clinging to the notion that the church is the only focus of what God is doing in the world today. There has to be a lot of spiritualizing of Scripture in order to hold to this view.

But if taken literally, then the words of Malachi – and indeed both testaments of Scripture – tell us that “the day” is not isolated to a single time of the past nor of a day future to us now. The judgment of God upon Israel is an ongoing succession of events. It is a day of judgment...

<sup>1 (con’t)</sup> **And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.  
And the day which is coming shall burn them up,”  
Says the Lord of hosts,  
“That will leave them neither root nor branch.**

*v’hayu khal zedim v’khal oseh rishah qash v’lihat otham hayom haba amar Y’hovah  
ts’vaoth asher lo yaazov lahem shoresh v’anaph –*

““And became all the arrogant,  
And all doing wickedness – stubble!  
And licks them, the day, the coming,’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth,  
‘Which naught relinquishes to them root and branch.’”

The arrogant and those doing wickedness correspond to those of the previous chapter –

“And now, we straightened arrogant,  
Also built doing wickedness,  
Also tested God and escape.” Malachi 3:15

Those who think they are ok, ignoring the Lord and trusting in themselves apart from Him, are nothing but stubble. They will be completely burnt up through His fiery judgment.

The word *lahat* is used. It comes from a primitive root signifying to lick. That, however, is interpreted as to blaze, burn, set on fire, and so forth. The idea is identical to our concept of flames licking up what they come in contact with.

This coming day will be like a flaming tongue that will lick up the arrogant in the firepot, consuming them. As for the words of the verse itself, they are like what John the Baptist said to the people –

“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, ‘Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup>Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, <sup>9</sup>and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as *our* father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. <sup>10</sup>And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>11</sup>I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup>His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.’” Matthew 3:7-12

John equates the time of this wrath to the time of Christ’s appearing. And yet, Jews formed the initial body of the church under the New Covenant. They continue to be saved today. Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 2 –

“For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans, <sup>15</sup>who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, <sup>16</sup>forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as

always to fill up *the measure of* their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.” 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16

Consider what is happening. Both Jews and Gentiles have entered the New Covenant. And yet, there are Jews who have not entered it. The Gentiles were never under the law, so those Jews who do not enter the New Covenant are the only ones who remain under the law.

The Law of Moses did not end for them when Christ came and initiated the New Covenant. It only ends for them if and when they enter into the New Covenant. Hebrews 8:13 makes this explicit –

“In that He says, ‘A new *covenant*,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.”

The law is obsolete. It is no longer what God is doing in the process of redemptive history. However, it is not yet gone. It remains binding upon Israel until they come into the New Covenant.

As for the saying, “Which naught relinquishes to them root and branch,” the general consensus passed on from scholar to scholar is that this is a proverbial saying expressing utter destruction and signifying that none shall escape. Although this is true for those being described, this is not the intent.

Rather, the meaning is to be derived from the purpose of roots and branches. A root provides stability, brings in moisture, transfers nutrients into the tree to feed it, and so forth.

The branches produce leaves that receive the sunlight, take in carbon dioxide, and convert it, along with water, into glucose and oxygen. Thus, they produce the necessary nutrients for the tree to grow. It doesn’t say there will be no root or branch, but that the fire, the judgment, will not relinquish to them root or branch.

Paul uses this metaphor and equates it to Israel in the process of God’s judgment, thus defining “the day” as an ongoing succession of events –

“For if the firstfruit *is* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*; and if the root *is* holy, so *are* the branches. <sup>17</sup> And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the

root and fatness of the olive tree, <sup>18</sup> do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, *remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.*”  
-Romans 11:16-18

Paul’s words are misinterpreted in many directions. The meaning is that branches are equated to what God is doing in the process of redemption. There are believing Jews and also believing Gentiles. The believing Jews are never broken off from God’s purposes. The believing Gentiles are grafted into God’s purposes. They receive what the roots provide and then produce what is needed for the tree.

The unbelieving Jews are broken off. They receive nothing, and they have no part in what God is doing in the New Covenant. Unbelieving Gentiles are never grafted into the tree.

Paul further explains this process, but this is the intent of the Lord’s words through Malachi. The focus is solely on Israel. The mystery of the inclusion of Gentiles is a part of God’s plans, but at the time of Malachi, it was a mystery not yet revealed. Thus, for the sake of the next words, the focus remains on Israel alone...

**<sup>2</sup> But to you who fear My name  
The Sun of Righteousness shall arise  
With healing in His wings;**

Rather: *v’zar’khah lakhem yire sh’mi shemesh ts’daqah umarphe bikhnapheha –*

“And arose to you – ‘fearful My name,’  
Sun Righteousness,  
And a healing in her extremities.”

The word *bikhnapheha* refers to a feminine entity as in her (or its), but certainly not his (His). The word sun is a common noun. The word righteousness is a feminine noun. Malachi is focusing on the righteousness aspect of the sun, not the sun itself. The righteousness defines the sun. More exactly, righteousness itself is equated to a sun.

To understand this, think of the song “Peace Train” by Cat Stevens. Peace is equated by him to a train that ran throughout the land. What is referred to here is a Righteousness Sun rising over the people who fear the name of the Lord.

This is not to diminish the role of Christ, but there is no personal reference to Him. Rather, the words are given to define what He did. This can be seen in the first use of the word righteousness in the New Testament –

“Then Jesus, He comes from the Galilee upon the Jordan unto John to be immersed by him. <sup>14</sup> And John, he thoroughly hinders Him, saying, ‘I, I have need by You to be immersed, and You, You come unto me?’ <sup>15</sup> And Jesus, having answered, said unto him, ‘Permit now, for thus it is fitting *for* us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he permits Him.” Matthew 3:13-15 (CG)

Christ’s coming is equated to a Righteousness Sun that shone over Israel. The people could not meet the demands of the law, but He could and did. His work fulfilled all righteousness (the extremities of the Righteousness Sun) for the people, thus healing them from the infection of sin that separated them from God.

The law, except as fulfilled by Him, stood opposed to them. They were expected to see this and come to Him for healing. This thought takes the reader all the way back to the introduction of sin in Genesis 3. The issue is dealt with, finally, in and through the work of Christ. For those who would trust in Him...

<sup>2 (con’t)</sup> **And you shall go out  
And grow fat like stall-fed calves.**

*vitsathem uphish’tem k’egle marbeq* – “And gone out and spread according to calves a stall.” The words are not limited to either the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 or to the tribulation as various scholars claim. Rather, at any time a person is eclipsed by the Righteousness Sun, he is healed. In this healing, such a person is freed as a calf from the stall.

The word used here is *phush*, a word coming from a primitive root signifying to spread. It is debated what the intent is. Some equate it to growing fat. But if the calves go out, they’re not stall-fed afterward. Such an analysis seems to jumble concepts.

Others equate it to the act of the calves, springing about as they spread out in the fields. That would be more of a paraphrase based on observation of how cows might act when released.

What seems most likely is that when calves are stalled, they are close together. Thus, everything under their feet would be crushed. As such, “according to calves a stall” is saying that when calves go out, what they do would be as explained in the next words...

**<sup>3</sup>You shall trample the wicked,**

*v’asothem r’shaim* – “And splootched wicked.” So, yes, I made that word up. The Hebrew word is *asas*, and it is found only here. It comes from a primitive root signifying to squeeze out juice. That brings to mind the sound or effect made when you grab something and squeeze out its juice – splootch.

There are other words that mean trample, tread, crush, etc. If one steps on a grape or squeezes a lemon, we don’t have a single word to uniquely describe the sound or effect. Words like press, puree, pulp, extract, and so forth each have their own meaning, but none of them fits perfectly. As for what happens after they are splootched...

**<sup>3 (con’t)</sup> For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet  
On the day that I do *this*,  
Says the Lord of hosts.**

*ki yihyu epher takhath kapoth raglekhem bayom asher ani oseh amar Y’hovah ts’vaoth* –

“For become ash under soles your feet,  
In the day which I doing.’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

When they are splootched out, there will be nothing left. Just as ashes under the soles of one’s foot disappear into nothingness, so it will be with the arrogant and the wicked.

Again, the intent is that this applies to the time when the Righteousness Sun shines upon a person. It is a timeframe, highlighted by the completion of Christ’s work, until the nation of Israel finally accepts Him.

Those who oppose the gospel, the arrogant and those doing wickedness, are being referred to as the recipients of the action by those who accept it.

The meaning isn’t that they will literally step on these people. Rather it is a metaphorical way of saying that the wicked will be regarded as if they were ashes under the soles of

the feet. Those who fear the Lord and reckon His name (Malachi 3:17) will not have to worry that their fear of the Lord is in vain.

While the others were saying “Emptiness serving God,” (3:14), those who feared the Lord understood there is nothing futile or empty in their reverence of Him.

*Remember what I have spoken  
And apply it to your daily walk  
Let My word be as a token  
So that the two of us can talk*

*Without My word, we stand at odds  
What kind of fellowship could we share  
If you are out following other gods  
Know with certainty, I would not be there*

*Remember the word that I have given  
Keep it in context and things will go well  
In My word are the details for true livin’  
They’ll set you on the right path, keeping you from hell*

## **II. Upon All Israel (verses 4-6)**

**<sup>4</sup>“Remember the Law of Moses, My servant,**

The verb is imperative: *zikhru torath Mosheh avdi* – “Remember! Law Moses, My servant.” The admonition is not for us today, as if we are to observe the law. Nor was it written for the Jews after Jesus’ coming, as if the law was still binding upon them.

The words were spoken to Israel at the time of Malachi. The law was in effect. It was to be obeyed. As such, no further revelation (more prophets coming to remind them of this) was to be expected.

The Lord has just promised that the Righteousness Sun was coming. That indicates quite clearly that the Law of Moses was not a Righteousness Sun. The law, as Paul openly states, was a tutor to lead us to Christ (Galatians 3:24).

In remembering the law and anticipating the promise set forth in Malachi, the people would then be prepared for the coming of Christ. Understanding this, the Lord continues with...

<sup>4</sup> (con't) **Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, With the statutes and judgments.**

*asher tsivithi otho b'khorev al kal Yisrael khuqim u-mishpatim –*

“Which commanded him in Horeb upon all Israel – Enactments and judgments.”

The words could not be clearer. The verb is first person common singular. The Lord commanded (*tsiviti* – I commanded) Moses the enactments and judgments of the Law.

It wasn't something that Moses conjured up on his own. Rather, it was the word of the Lord commanded by Him to and through Moses. As such, the words confirm the dating of the law. It cannot be that the law was penned much later if the Lord, through Malachi, states that He commanded it to Moses.

And more, it says that this was “in Horeb.” The words not only confirm the dating of the law but also the circumstances by which it came about. The words of Moses in Deuteronomy claim that the law was received in Horeb. The Lord confirms this through Malachi. And more, the law commanded “upon all Israel.”

Israel had agreed to the terms of the covenant. In doing so, they placed not only themselves under its precepts but the nation as an existing entity, meaning in its continuance throughout the generations. The law was a formal agreement that remained binding upon the nation and its people.

They had no right to amend it, walk away from it, disregard it, etc. If they attempted to do so, they would suffer the punishments detailed in it. And those punishments were sure to come unless they paid heed to what is next said...

<sup>5</sup> **Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet**

*hineh anokhi sholeakh lakehm eth Eliyah hanavi – “Behold! I sending to you Elijah the prophet.”*

The words of verse 4 tell us that no further prophetic revelation was to be expected. The people were to remember the Law of Moses, meaning not only know what it said but also perform what it prescribed.

They would receive no more reminders or warnings. Instead, they had exactly what they needed to make the right choice and determination when the time arrived. When it arrived, the Lord promised to send Elijah the prophet.

As noted earlier, Jesus pinpointed the coming of John the Baptist with the promise of Elijah. However, when asked about who he was, John's words appear to argue against that –

“Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’

<sup>20</sup> He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, ‘I am not the Christ.’

<sup>21</sup> And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’

He said, ‘I am not.’

‘Are you the Prophet?’

And he answered, ‘No.’

<sup>22</sup> Then they said to him, ‘Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?’

<sup>23</sup> He said: ‘I am

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’”

as the prophet Isaiah said.” John 1:19-23

This tells us that the idea of a succession of events concerning the words of Malachi concerning “the day” that is coming is correct. John was sent to fulfill the promise of Elijah's return.

In Revelation 2:20, Jesus speaks of “that woman Jezebel.” This doesn't mean Jezebel of the Old Testament book of Kings. And yet, He uses the name to identify this woman with her.

This is what Jesus did with John the Baptist. He identified John as the prophetic fulfillment of the one who would restore the people to proper law worship so that when Jesus came, He would be recognized as the One the law anticipated.

That calling did not end with John's death. The message of John continues to this day in the pages of Scripture. Each Jew that reads and accepts his testimony concerning Jesus and then accepts Jesus is instructed by "Elijah" as referred to by Jesus.

And yet, the actual Elijah will return in fulfillment of the word of the Lord through Malachi. This is because Malachi explicitly states that Elijah will be sent because John explicitly said he is not Elijah, and because there will be two witnesses already identified in the Old Testament who will come to witness to the truth of God in Christ during the tribulation.

Although they are not named, a logical deduction of who each is can be made. First, in the Zechariah 4, it says –

"I am looking, and there *is* a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the *stand* seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. <sup>3</sup>Two olive trees *are* by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." Zechariah 4:2, 3

"Then I answered and said to him, 'What *are* these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?' <sup>12</sup> And I further answered and said to him, 'What *are these* two olive branches that *drip* into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden *oil* drains?'

<sup>13</sup> Then he answered me and said, 'Do you not know what these *are*?'  
And I said, 'No, my lord.'

<sup>14</sup> So he said, 'These *are* the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.'" Zechariah 4:11-14

Later, in Revelation 11, these two are further described –

"And I will give *power* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

<sup>4</sup> These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. <sup>5</sup> And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. <sup>6</sup> These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

<sup>7</sup> When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. <sup>8</sup> And their dead

bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” Revelation 11:3-8

As they were identified first in Zechariah, we know that they are from Old Testament times. As only two people from the Old Testament were taken by God and are still alive today, Enoch and Elijah, we can correctly deduce that they are the two witnesses.

As they will testify in Jerusalem (as noted, “where also our Lord was crucified”), the promise of the return of Elijah in Malachi will find its final fulfillment at that time, which is...

<sup>5</sup>(con’t) **Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.**

*liphne bo yom Y’hovah ha’gadol v’hanora –*

“To faces coming day Yehovah –  
The whopping and the fearing.”

Again, there is a successive fulfillment of this. In their rejection of Christ Jesus after the testimony of John, Israel received the punishment of the curses of Leviticus and Deuteronomy. They continue to receive this with each rejection of Him today.

Each Jew who dies apart from Jesus will likewise face the great and dreadful day of the Lord when they stand before Him. But the nation as a whole will again have to face this decision with the coming of Elijah during the tribulation. He will instruct them just as John the Baptist did. Those who pay heed will find a different fate awaits them than those who fail to do so.

As you can see, the problem with explaining these verses with a single fulfillment of them is evident. It fails to take the whole of Scripture into consideration. John the Baptist came as a type of Elijah, identifying with his promised mission. Elijah himself will be sent to complete the process...

<sup>6</sup>**And he will turn  
The hearts of the fathers to the children,  
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,**

*v’heshiv lev avoth al banim v’lev banim al avotham –*

“And turned heart fathers upon sons,  
And heart sons upon fathers.”

This is not a verse describing immediate family relations, as in, “He will turn the people in the families to love one another.” Rather, this is a word concerning the Hebrew people as a whole. The fathers are the patriarchs, especially Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The children are those who have misunderstood both the promise to the patriarchs and the purpose of the law. The heart of the fathers was that of promise while trusting in the gospel of the grace of God. Paul explains this in Galatians 3 –

“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, *saying*, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’<sup>9</sup> So then those who *are* of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.”

...

“And this I say, *that* the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.<sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance *is* of the law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.”

-Galatians 3:8, 9, & 17, 18

The hearts of the children, the unbelievers of Israel, will have their hearts turned to the hearts of the fathers who trusted the gospel of Christ as a certain and sure promise. If they do not turn their hearts, the warning stands...

<sup>6 (fin)</sup> **Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”**

*pen avo v'hikethi eth ha'arets kharem* – “Lest come and strike the land – anathema.” The Old Testament, the time of man’s living under the curse of law, ends with the word *kherem*, anathema. It speaks of the utter destruction or ban of something. It is a fitting end to the thirty-nine books of law.

Only with the hope of God in Christ is there life and renewed fellowship with God. Only in understanding the gospel can that state be realized.

As with the whole chapter, these final words speak of a dual fulfillment. The first part of it came about when Israel rejected Jesus. He told them as much in Matthew 23:36, saying, “Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.”

The nation as a whole rejected Jesus, remained under law, and fell under the ban because of it. The second fulfillment will be for those of Israel who continue to reject Jesus during the tribulation. However, for the nation, that will eventually end. The land of Israel, symbolized by Jerusalem, was anathema because of Israel's rejection of Jesus. This is seen in Zechariah 14:11 –

*“The people shall dwell in it;  
And no longer shall there be utter destruction [kherem],  
But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.”*

This prophecy concerns the future when Israel finally receives Jesus. Only when the hearts of the children are turned to the hearts of the fathers will this time of woe for Israel end.

The day is coming, and the world is being readied for it with the return of Israel to her land. The nation has been reestablished, prophecies of the past have come to their fulfillment, and many more prophecies are set to be fulfilled.

The book is written, and these things will come about. We are simply spectators watching as the words of Scripture are faithfully realized, often before our own eyes. At some point, the rapture will take place and the attention of the Lord will be directed to bringing about the final restoration of Israel while also bringing about judgment upon all who refuse to believe.

Malachi sets forth both the hope of restoration and the warning of rejecting it. Though it is directed to Israel, for those who know Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles, we can learn from what is said here.

Our trust is not to be in the Law of Moses but in the One who is spoken of there and throughout all of Scripture. It is not easy to let go and place ourselves solely under the authority of another, but we must do so. If we are in need of surgery, we have to trust that the surgeon will get us through the ordeal.

In the case of our eternal souls, we have to let go of trusting in ourselves and look to the eternal gospel, which God has slowly and methodically revealed to the world through His word. And that gospel is centered completely and entirely on the Person of Jesus Christ.

Let us not fail to put our trust in Him. Anything else will not carry us through to the restoration that God offers to His people. Yes, let us trust solely in the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*When everything fades,  
My strength is no more.  
I have nothing left.  
Yet, I have it all!  
Your goodness, your grace,  
Still lives in me.  
I don't have to be afraid.  
I still have this peace;*

*My Lord overcomes  
The surges of storms.  
When people's hearts fail  
He is still in control.  
No waves high enough  
Could cover the truth;  
There is no storm  
Stronger than You!*

*I sit in my pity,  
In my fallen ways,  
But my Lord is perfect!  
So is his grace.  
His love is sufficient!  
His love floods my soul,  
I'm saved in your arms  
So please hold me, Lord.  
~Izabela Bednara, 9 October 2024*

**Closing Verse:** *"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."*

*-Revelation 22:21*

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He has sent His Messenger to carry the good news to all people. Jesus! God promised, and God delivered. The time of the law has ended, and grace has come. Praise God for Jesus.

### **Malachi 4:1-6 (CG)**

For behold! The day coming:  
Burning according to the firepot.  
And became all the arrogant,  
And all doing wickedness – stubble!  
And licks them, the day, the coming,  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth,  
Which naught relinquishes to them root and branch.  
<sup>2</sup> And arose to you – fearful My name,  
Sun Righteousness,  
And a healing in her wings.  
And gone out and spread according to calves a stall.  
<sup>3</sup> And splotted wicked,  
For become ash under soles your feet,  
In the day which I doing.  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.  
<sup>4</sup> Remember! Law Moses, My servant,  
Which commanded him in Horeb upon all Israel –  
Enactments and judgments.  
<sup>5</sup> Behold! I sending to you Elijah the prophet,  
To faces coming day Yehovah –  
The whopping and the fearing.  
<sup>6</sup> And turned heart fathers upon sons,  
And heart sons upon fathers.  
Lest come and strike the land – anathema.

### **Malachi 4:1-6 (NKJV)**

“For behold, the day is coming,  
Burning like an oven,  
And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.  
And the day which is coming shall burn them up,”  
Says the Lord of hosts,  
“That will leave them neither root nor branch.  
<sup>2</sup> But to you who fear My name  
The Sun of Righteousness shall arise  
With healing in His wings;  
And you shall go out

And grow fat like stall-fed calves.

<sup>3</sup>You shall trample the wicked,  
For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet  
On the day that I do *this*,”  
Says the Lord of hosts.

<sup>4</sup>“Remember the Law of Moses, My servant,  
Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel,  
*With the* statutes and judgments.

<sup>5</sup>Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet  
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

<sup>6</sup>And he will turn  
The hearts of the fathers to the children,  
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,  
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”

## THE BOOK OF MALACHI (CG TRANSLATION)

### Malachi 1

<sup>1</sup> A lifting - word Yehovah unto Israel in hand Malachi.

<sup>2</sup> “‘I loved you,’ said Yehovah.  
And said, ‘In how loved us?’  
‘Not brother, Esau, to Jacob?’  
Utterance Yehovah.  
‘And I love Jacob.

<sup>3</sup> And Esau, I hate,  
And set his mountains – a devastation.  
And his inheritance to jackals wilderness.”

<sup>4</sup> “For says Edom,  
‘Demolished! And return, and build wastelands.’”  
“Thus said Yehovah Sabaoth:  
‘They build, and I raze.  
And called to them Territory Wickedness,  
And “the people whom frothed Yehovah until vanishment.”

<sup>5</sup> And your eyes see,  
And you say,  
‘Magnified, Yehovah, from upon to border Israel.’”

<sup>6</sup> “‘Son honors father,  
And servant his master.  
And if Father, I –  
Where My honor?  
And if Lords, I –  
Where My fear?’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth to you, the priests, disesteeming My name.’  
And said, ‘In what we disesteemed Your name?’

<sup>7</sup> ‘Approaching upon My altar bread defiled.  
And said, ‘In what defiled You?’  
In your saying, ‘Table, Yehovah – disesteemed it.’

<sup>8</sup> ‘And when (surely) approach blind to sacrifice – “Not evil!”  
And when approach lame and rubbed – “Not evil!”

Near it, I pray, to your governor!  
He accept you or lift faces you?  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

<sup>9</sup> ““And now, rub, I pray, faces God!  
And He favors us?  
(From your hand became this!)  
He lifts from you faces?’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

<sup>10</sup> ““Who also in you, and shut double-doors!  
And no light my altar gratuitously!  
Not to Me pleasure in you.’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.  
‘And present – no accept from your hand.’”

<sup>11</sup> ““For from ascension sun, and until his descension,  
Great My name in the Gentiles.  
And in every place, incense approached to My name,  
And present, pure.  
For great My name in the Gentiles,’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

<sup>12</sup> ““And you pierce it in your saying,  
‘Table Adonai – defiled it,  
And His produce – disesteemed His food.’

<sup>13</sup> And say, ‘Behold! What distress!’  
And puffed it,  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.  
And brought stripped, and the lame, and the rubbing.  
And brought the present!  
Accept it from your hand?’  
Said Yehovah.”

<sup>14</sup> ““And cursed deceiving,  
And is in his flock male,  
And vowing,  
And sacrificing ruined to Adonai.

For King great, I,  
Said Jehovah Sabaoth.  
'And My name feared in the Gentiles.'"

## **Malachi 2**

<sup>1</sup> "And now, unto you, the commandment, the this, the priests:

<sup>2</sup> If not hear! And if not set upon heart!

To give honor to My name,'

Said Jehovah Sabaoth."

"And sent in you the execration.

(And execrated your blessings.)

And also execrated it.

For naught you setting upon heart!

<sup>3</sup> Behold Me! Rebuking to you "the seed,"

And scattered excrement upon your faces –

Excrement your festivals.

And lifted you unto it!

<sup>4</sup> And known, for sent unto you the commandment, the this.

To become My covenant with Levi.'

Said Jehovah Sabaoth."

<sup>5</sup> "My covenant became with him the life and the peace,

And gave them to him – a fear.

And feared Me,

And from faces My name prostrated, he.

<sup>6</sup> Law truth became in his mouth,

And iniquity not found in his lips.

In peace and in level, walked with Me,

And many turned from perversity.

<sup>7</sup> For lips priest guard knowledge,

And law seek from his mouth.

For messenger Jehovah Sabaoth – he.

<sup>8</sup> And you veered from the way,

Wavered many in the law,  
Ruined covenant the Levite,  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

<sup>9</sup>“And also, I, I made you disesteemed and abased,  
To all the people,  
According to mouth which not you guarding with My ways.  
And lifting faces in the law.

<sup>10</sup> Not Father one to us all?  
Not God one created us??  
Why deals covertly man in his brother,  
To profane covenant our fathers?

<sup>11</sup> Dealt covertly, Judah,  
And abhorrence done in Israel and in Jerusalem.  
For profaned, Judah, holy Yehovah – which loved,  
And married daughter god foreign.

<sup>12</sup> May cut off, Yehovah!  
(To the man who does it – awakening and heeding)  
From tents Jacob,  
And approaches offering to Yehovah Sabaoth.

<sup>13</sup> And this second do:  
Covering tears altar Yehovah – a weeping and a shrieking,  
From naught again turning unto the present,  
And to taking a delight from your hands.

<sup>14</sup> And said, “Upon what?”  
That Yehovah repeated between you and between wife your youths,  
Whom you dealt covertly in her,  
And she, your consort and wife, your covenant.

<sup>15</sup> And not, one, made?  
And remainder Spirit to him?  
And why the one?  
Seeking seed God.  
And watch in your spirit

And in wife his youths not dealt covertly.

<sup>16</sup> “For hate ‘sending away’

Said Yehovah God Israel.”

“‘And covered – violence upon his garment,’

Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

And watch in your spirit,

And no deal covertly.

<sup>17</sup> Gaspd, Yehovah in your words.

And said, “In what gasped?”

In your saying, “All doing evil good in eye Yehovah.

And in them, He inclined.”

Or, “Where God the verdict?””

### **Malachi 3**

<sup>1</sup> “Behold Me – Sending My messenger,

And turned way to My faces

And instantly comes unto His temple,

The Lord, whom you seek,

And Messenger the covenant,

Whom you – delighted.

Behold! Coming!’

Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

<sup>2</sup> “‘And who contains day His coming?

And who the standing in His appearing?

For He according to fire – smelting.

And according to alkali – washing.

<sup>3</sup> And sat, smelting and purifying silver,

And purified sons Levi.

And refined them according to the gold,

And according to the silver.

And became to Yehovah –

Approaching present in righteousness.

<sup>4</sup> And sweetened, to Yehovah, present Judah and Jerusalem,

According to days concealed,

And according to years anterior.  
<sup>5</sup> And neared unto you to the judgment.  
And became witness hastening,  
In the incantings,  
And in the adulterings,  
And in the swearings to the untruth,  
And in oppressing salary salaried, widow, and orphan,  
And deflectings sojourner,  
And no feared Me.'  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth."

<sup>6</sup> "For I, Yehovah! Not transmuted.  
And you, sons Jacob, not ended.  
<sup>7</sup> To from days your fathers,  
Veered from My enactments,  
And not guarded.  
Return unto Me,  
And I am returning unto you.'  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth."  
"And said, "In what returning?"

<sup>8</sup> "Defrauds man God?  
For you defrauding Me.  
And say, "In what defrauding You?"  
'The tithe and the oblation.  
<sup>9</sup> In the execration, you execrated.  
And Me you defrauding,  
The nation – it all.  
<sup>10</sup> Bring all the tithe unto house the depository,  
And there shall be fragment in My house.  
And Me test in this.'  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth."  
"If not open to you windows the heavens,  
And emptied to you blessing until failure sufficiency.  
<sup>11</sup> And rebuked to you in 'the eating,'  
And no ruins to you fruit the ground,  
And no miscarries to you the vine in the field,'  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth."  
<sup>12</sup> "And straightened you, all the nations,

For become you land desirable.’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”

<sup>13</sup> “‘Seized upon Me your words,’ said Yehovah.”  
“And said, ‘What spoken upon You?’  
<sup>14</sup> Said, ‘Emptiness serving God,  
And what gain, for kept His watch,  
And for walked blackishly in faces Yehovah Sabaoth.  
<sup>15</sup> And now, we straightened arrogant,  
Also built doing wickedness,  
Also tested God and escape.’”

<sup>16</sup> “Then spoke, ‘fear Yehovah,’ man to his friend,  
And hearkens, Yehovah, and hears,  
And writes book remembrance to His faces,  
To ‘fear Yehovah,’  
And reckoning His name.”  
<sup>17</sup> “‘And became to Me,’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”  
“To the day which I making possession.  
And commiserate upon them,  
According to which commiserates man upon his son – the ‘serving him.’  
<sup>18</sup> And returned and seen between just to wicked,  
Between serving God to whom not Him served.”

#### **Malachi 4**

<sup>1</sup> “‘For behold! The day coming:  
Burning according to the firepot.  
And became all the arrogant,  
And all doing wickedness – stubble!  
And licks them, the day, the coming.’  
Said Yehovah Sabaoth.”  
“Which naught relinquishes to them root and branch.  
<sup>2</sup> And arose to you – ‘fearful My name,’  
Sun Righteousness,  
And a healing in her extremities.  
And gone out and spread according to calves a stall.  
<sup>3</sup> And splootched wicked,

For become ash under soles your feet,  
In the day which I doing.  
'Said Yehovah Sabaoth.'"  
<sup>4</sup> "Remember! Law Moses, My servant,  
Which commanded him in Horeb upon all Israel –  
Enactments and judgments.  
<sup>5</sup> Behold! I sending to you Elijah the prophet,  
To faces coming day Yehovah –  
The whopping and the fearing.  
<sup>6</sup> And turned heart fathers upon sons,  
And heart sons upon fathers.  
Lest come and strike the land – anathema."